

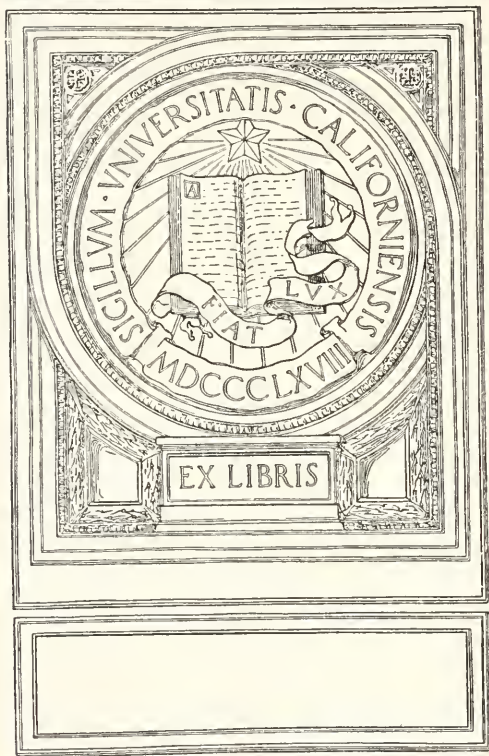
THE NOVELS OF
MATTEO BANDELLI
ENGLISHED
BY JOHN
PAYNE

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The Novels of Bandello

Volume Four

The Novels of Matteo Bandello Bishop
of Agen now first done into English
Prose and Verse by John Payne

Author of The Masque of Shadows Intaglios

Songs of Life and Death Lautre New

Poems etc. and Translator of The Poems

of Master Francis Villon of Paris

The Book of the Thousand Nights

and One Night Tales from the

Arabic The Decameron of

Giobanni Boccacci

(El Boeccaccio) and

Maeddin etc.

V o l u m e

F o u r

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VOL. IV.

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I

Bandello

to the most illustrious and reverend prelate Mon-
signor Paolo, Marquess of Carretto, Bishop
and Count of Cahors.

It useth, my, lord, to be unto every man a source of exceeding satisfaction and contentment of mind to know the origin of his lineage, and the higher and nobler the stock whereof he cometh, of so much more the account doth he hold himself. Again, whoso is not plainly certified of the high and illustrious origin of his family, but knoweth at the least that his forefathers have lived nobly some hundreds of years, taketh no small pleasure in this knowledge. And we see by experience that, whenas men are certified of the beginning of some family, that it is descended of noble ancestors or hath endured many ages, it abideth in exceeding worship with all, especially whenas it chanceth to produce in every age men excellent for dignity, letters or arms and maintaineth jurisdiction over lands and castles. We are all indeed descended in unbroken succession from our first parent Adam and Eve his wife, and our Lord God Almighty giveth unto all rational souls of one kind, committing unto secondary causes the care of moulding human bodies, one better organized than other, even as we daily see many born variously fashioned and different; for that some come into the world deaf, some

shield, meseeming I might not better bestow it nor give it a fitter patron than yourself, setting out, as it doth, the noble and imperial origin of your most illustrious house. You may, indeed, my lord, vaunt yourself without leasing of having all those parts which are required of true nobility, seeing your house had such a beginning that there be few to match therewith, it being descended on both sides of blood royal and imperial and having moreover abidden most illustrious through many centuries, producing a succession of men eminent in every kind of worth, and presently flourisheth as much as ever, degenerating no whit from its ancient greatness. Who is there knoweth not the marquesses of Carretto (who were erst styled Marquesses of Savona, for that with this title they were invested by Otho the Second, Emperor of Rome,) to be among the most illustrious and noblest families of Italy? I will not presently enumerate the many ancestors of your family who have been famous in every age, for that in truth there came not so many heroes out of the Trojan horse as men glorious for shining fame have issued from your stock; and not to recount its reverend antiquity, which would be an overlong story, suffice it to name to you two or three of your house whom we have all known. Your own age hath seen Signor Fabrizio your uncle, Grand Master of Rhodes, whose valour, wit, authority and prowess were of such sort that, what while he lived and had the governance, the Emperor of the Turks dared never assail the island, it being more than certain that he would have undertaken such an emprise in vain. What shall I say of your other uncle, the Cardinal of Holy Church, who was so dear and so acceptable to Pope Julius the Second and to the Most Christian King Louis the Twelfth (a judicious appraiser

of men's worth and fidelity) that he was of the one inscribed of the number of the cardinals and still honourably employed of the other in affairs of exceeding great moment? I pass over your third uncle and Alfonso your father, both Marquesses of Finario, and Giovanni your brother, a young man nowise inferior to his forbears. Ah, had not death untimely snatched him from us, he had given no mean approof of himself! But, wounded to the death at Tunis,¹ in the emprise against the enemies of Christ, he passed to a better life and shed more glory from his wounds than blood. However, he hath left us of himself and of his dearest wife, the lady Ginevra Bentivoglia, many children, who, being excellently well reared, will speedily renew for us the paternal and ancestral virtue. Great, indeed, then, my lord, should your contentment be, knowing yourself begotten of so generous, so noble and so honoured a family; but greater yet methinketh should be (and I am fain to believe is) your satisfaction, feeling yourself to be such as sorteth with the greatness of your ancestors. And if I wrote of you to other than yourself, I know well that which I might truthfully say of your shining virtues and what panegyrics I might indite, if my power of diction and eloquence were equal unto your merit; but I am loath to be holden a flatterer, praising you to your face, for that I have been ever far removed from the like vice. Let the time come when I shall see your sacred locks covered with the red hat² and then I will enforce myself to drain all the founts of Helicon in your praise. Deign,

¹ *i.e.* at the capture of La Goletta by the Emperor Charles V. in 1535.

² *i.e.* the Cardinal's hat.

therefore, for this present, to accept of me this little gift ; marry, I give you as much as I may, and if the gift seem to you little worth, look not to your greatness and your merit, but bethink you of my insignificance and lack of ableness and remember that poor folk, who cannot offer up gold and silver before God, enforce themselves at the least to adorn His holy altars with leaves and flowers ; in imitation of whom I offer at your shrine these trifling fruits of my sterile wit. May our Lord God prosper all your thoughts, giving you that which you desire ; and so, kissing your reverend hands, I humbly commend myself to your favour. Fare you well.

The Twentieth Story.

SETTING FORTH THE ORIGIN OF THE MAR- QUESSES OF CARRETTO AND OF OTHER MARQUISATES IN MONFERRATO AND LE LANGHE.¹

The ancient histories of the kings and dukes of Saxony relate that Otho, first of that name emperor among the Germans, was born of a daughter of the king of that country, which was after from a kingdom made a duchy and is yet governed under that title.² This Otho had by his wife Matilda a son, who was on like wise named Otho and who

¹ A tract of country in Piedmont, lying between Alba and Cevi and anciently divided into numerous small fiefs holden of the Empire.

² Napoleon re-erected the duchy into a kingdom.

also became emperor, under the title of Otho the Second, and was, for the benignity of his nature, styled of all Amor Mundi, to wit, the Love of the World, for that he was loath to aggrieve any and would fain have done all men pleasure ; algates, he was of a warlike humour and to maintain the imperial jurisdictions, undertook very goodly emprises. He had a very fair daughter and higher-hearted than behoved unto a woman, who was called Adelasia ; and there was at court, in the emperor's service, a son of the Duke of Saxony, Aleramo by name, a very goodly youth and exceeding proficient in letters, whose father, dying, (for that he was not the first-born,) left him to heritage divers castles in Saxony, with a good enough revenue. He passed for the prowest man of his person of all that were at court, and being, to boot, of lofty understanding, he bore himself in all his dealings on such wise that there was none might be evened with him. It chanced, one day amongst others, that, a hunt being toward, certain of the young courtiers, not content with the beasts and wild fowl taken by the dogs, boldly set themselves to make prize of a bear, which was come forth of its cave, and among them there was none bore himself more valiantly than Aleramo, who, lighting down from his horse, (for that the steed would not budge for fear of the wild beast) went courageously to meet the bear and to the infinite admiration of the whole court, overcame it, without suffering any hurt. Adelasia, hearing of this prowess, cast her eyes upon Aleramo and herseeming he was the debonairest, the most courteous and the most valiant lord at her father's court and did everything better than any other, she became insensibly sore enamoured of him. Now she was but a girl and Aleramo himself had not yet over-passed twenty years of age.

Meanwhile Otho I. died and Adelasia's father was

elected emperor, nor for this her father's advancement did she change any whit from her love ; nay, she was all afire therewith and her passion was so much the heavier upon her as she might the less avail to vent it. Aleramo, noting the damsel's love, in his turn received the amorous flames into his breast and that on such wise that he could turn his mind to no otherwhat day or night, having still before his eyes her beauty which had so sore enkindled him. Most wonderful and hard to fathom are the ways of love ! There were at the court of Otho II. a great number of young and notable men, but none pleased the damsel save Aleramo alone. Again, there were to be seen there all day long most fair and lovesome ladies, but among so many Adelasia alone availed to enkindle Aleramo's heart. The two lovers, then, loved each other very secretly nor dared confide in any one ; their eyes only were the trusty secretaries of their passion and the swift messengers of their hidden thoughts. And albeit they talked together bytimes, they dared not ever discover their flame one to other ; nevertheless it seemed to both that they were exceeding well requited of their love, the which added fire unto their fire.

Adelasia, who was a girl of fifteen, being tenderer and more delicate, suffered inexpressible torment, affliction and annoy from the flames of love ; wherefore, thinking of no otherwhat than of her dear lover, she said many a time in herself, whenas she was alone, "What is this that I feel more than of wont in my heart ? Whence cometh it that my accustomed way of life no longer pleaseth me ? To take the needle and labour at embroidery, which used to be so pleasing, is presently a weariness to me ; reading, which so delighted me, no more contenteth me ; the company of my damsels, which erst held me so merry, the frolicking with them, which so diverted me, the going

apleasuring about the gardens, which I so loved, and the sight of various sports, which I so oft went seeking, meseemeth are now grown irksome to me and I desire and seek no otherwhat than to abide alone and feed my thought upon this new flame, which consumeth my bones and my marrow. Alone before my eyes there abideth without cease the fair and noble image of the valiant and courteous Aleramo of Saxony. Whenas I think of him, I breathe and am at ease ; if I see him, I burn and freeze ; and if I see him not, I seek and desire him. When I hear him speak, his sweetest speech so floodeth my mind and my breast that I could abide eternally intent upon his lips. But, woe is me ! What say I ? What think I ? Of what dreamest thou, Adelasia ? What dost thou desire ? Alack, my heart, put away from thee these strange and idle thoughts, neither give way to these flames, which are enkindled against all right and reason. Ah me, an but I might avail not to ail, as I presently do ! Alas, what strange might urgeth me, in mine own despite, to go whither I would fain not go ! Reason counselleth me one thing, but love will have me do altogether the contrary and constraineth me so sore that it suffereth me not breathe an hour. Marry, what have I to do with Aleramo more than with the other gentlemen and barons of the court ? If, indeed, his parents and mine are descended from the house of Saxony, it be- seemeth not therefor that I should love him more than of reason ; nay, it behoveth me love him who shall be given me to spouse, according to ancient usance. But what lady is there who would not love Aleramo ? Who is there so discreet, so coy, so insensible that, knowing herself beloved of him, she might avail so to fend herself that she would not abide subject unto him ? Me, certes, he hath taken on such wise and bounden with so strait a knot that, an he lend

me not aid, needs must I soon miserably end my days. Am I, then, fain, being yet unmarried, to submit myself unto one who, after he is sated of me, will go his ways and leave me here scorned and dishonoured? Nay, his gentle aspect, his pleasant fashions, his infinite courtesy and the goodness he discovereth in his every action warrant me against such cruelty and such graceless ingratitude, for that he, being virtuous and most noble, will be eke constant and faithful. He shall first pledge me his faith not to abandon me and shall espouse me to his lawful wife; and if it be not vouchsafed us to abide here, the world is wide. So but I abide with him, I cannot fare other than well, let what will be said of me after. Enough that I shall not hear that which will be said; nay, even did I hear missay of me, what then? Shall I be the first that hath abandoned country and kin for love? Innumerable are the women who have voluntarily followed after their lovers. Helen chose to be carried off and abandoning her husband, to go with her Paris to Troy. Phædra and Ariadne of their free will followed Theseus. None enforced Medea to leave her father and her native land and flee with Jason; or if any enforced these, certes it was love, the which in truth enforceth me also follow my Aleramo whithersoever he shall seek to go. Alack, how go I (fool that I am!) wandering amidst these my idle thoughts! Even yet I know not Aleramo's mind, who, albeit meseemeth indeed he loveth me, will belike shrink from forfeiting my father's favour, for that, losing it, he will lose therewith his native land and whatsoever he possesseth in Saxony."

These and other like thoughts Adelasia revolved a thousand times day and night and eke changed purpose again and again. Nor did Aleramo live a life less tormented with extravagant fancies, for that strange and cruel thoughts

of his love still whirled through his head and on each he dwelt long, except that he could not brook the thought of not loving her. Adelasia again and again determined in herself to quell that her strange passion and to turn her mind elsewhither; but no sooner did she see her Aleramo than she straightway changed purpose and repenting her, burned like as doth flax in the fields, whenas, fire being set thereto, the north wind bloweth upon it and enkindleth it on all sides. Leisure added fuel to her flames, whenas she should have quenched them, and desire still waxed in her to make that her ardour known to her dear lover; wherefore it may be said, with the poet, that chastity harboureth but in humble and lowly dwellings and that poverty alone is honest and hath wholesome effects. Modesty seldom reigneth whereas ease and idlesse prevail, for that love ariseth of leisure and wantonness, whose food is sweet and idle thoughts, dulcet glances, soft and wanton words and (as saith the Florentine) the delighting to do nothing.

Adelasia, then, being all afire and seeing no means of abating her flames, nay, feeling them wax hourly fiercer, determined to discover her sufferings to Rodegonda, a very noble and discreet woman, in whom she much trusted, having from the cradle been still reared and governed by her; wherefore, being one day alone with her, she bespoke her on this wise, saying, "The trust I have always had in you, Rodegonda mine, beloved of me as a mother, and your good qualities, together with the discretion which I have still noted in you, assure me that I need not fear to share with you certain thoughts of mine, convinced as I am that you will keep my counsel of that, be it good or bad, which I now purpose to impart to you. Accordingly, not to multiply words, you must know, to come to the fact, that the prowess, the merit, the discreet fashions and the modest

manners of Aleramo of Saxony have long pleased me more than I could wish and his pleasantness hath so taken hold upon my heart that, will I, nill I, I am forced to love him more than myself. I have tried a thousand means to banish him from my thought; but meseemeth the more I strive thereat, the farther doth he penetrate into my heart and lordeth it on such sort over me and my thoughts that it is impossible for me to live without his memory. Nay, I find myself come to this pass that, except I foregather with him, needs must I go mad or die. I know it would avail me nothing to ask him of the emperor to husband, both because I understand that he is in treaty with the King of Hungary to give me to him to wife and eke for that Aleramo is a poor gentleman and of no such high degree as my father would have his son-in-law. Of you, then, in this my need, I crave counsel and aid."

Rodegonda, hearing these words, was all confounded, but presently, recovering her strayed senses, "Alack, mistress mine," quoth she, "what is this you tell me? Will you have me begin, in mine old age, to play the traitor to my lord and do that, being stricken in years, which I never did in my youth? Seek not, for God's sake, to make me do that which would bring eternal reproach and death, belike, to boot, upon us both; nay, an you will hearken to my counsel, you will quench the noxious flames enkindled in your chaste bosom, so I may not bring both you and me to perdition. Let not vain hope deceive you; do but resist these first impulses and you will lightly become mistress of yourself. He who fostereth this poison of love maketh himself the slave of a cruel and masterful tyrant and cannot after, an he will, do his neck free from his most grievous yoke. Ah me, what would become of you if the emperor knew the sore default which you think to commit? Know

you not that love may not long abide secret and that the more you seek to conceal it, the more will it make itself known and felt on every side?" "Marry," rejoined Adelasia, "let us speak no more of the matter. Here is no room for fear and he dreadeth nought who hath no fear of death. Let what will ensue of this my love ; I am ready to endure all with a stout and steadfast mind. I know right well that I do ill to love one who is not my husband ; but who putteth a curb upon lovers, who giveth them a law ? I love Aleramo ; ay, and it pleaseth me to be constrained thereunto. My father seeketh to give me to wife to the King of Hungary and I know not who he is, save that they tell me he is fifty years old and I have not yet seen sixteen. How is it possible that I should love this old king, having Aleramo's image so fast fixed in my heart that death alone may banish it thence ? Now, since I see that you are disposed neither to counsel me nor to aid me how I may have Aleramo and that you reck no whit of this my love, I will myself provide for my occasions, and if I may not have my Aleramo, who shall forbid me from seeking an ultimate refuge in death ?"

The pitiful Rodegonda, dismayed by this speech, melted into bitter tears and after she had wept awhile, "Since, mistress mine," quoth she, "you say you cannot live without Aleramo, restrain awhile the violence of your passion and leave the care of this your love to me ; nay, torment yourself no more, for I will find good means to speak with him and to let him know your mind." This promise comforted the enamoured damsel, who bestowed a thousand kisses upon the old woman and urgently besought her to set about the matter without delay. But let us now speak awhile of Aleramo, who loved no less passionately than Adelasia and burned, nay, rather, he

raved. Perceiving by most manifest signs that his love was requited of the damsel, he abode more hers than his own and knew not nor indeed wished to turn his thoughts elsewhither; wherefore, one day, being all alone in his chamber and pondering his case, he began to reason with himself as follows, saying, "Thou hast, Aleramo, many a time heard tell, nay, thou hast read for thyself what manner of thing love is and knowest that in the end little good is found therein. Knowest thou not that it is none otherwhat than brief laughter and long mourning, scant pleasure and exceeding dole? He who is subject unto love still dieth and never maketh an end of dying; and yet needs must I love. Marry, this is a passion which all the world feeleth. How many emperors, dukes, marquesses and lords and how many valiant captains have been the slaves of love? Julius Cæsar conquered so many kings, peoples, armies and captains and Cleopatra conquered him. Augustus, enamoured of Livia, took her from her husband. Nero, proudest and cruellest of men, yet bowed his neck unto love. Marcus Aurelius [Antoninus], he who was so sage, so learned and so good, how was he entreated of Faustina? What did Mark Anthony in Egypt for love of Cleopatra? Hercules, who purged the world of so many monsters, for love of Iole submitted to spin with the distaff at his side.¹ The strong Achilles against love found himself most weak. But why go I recounting those who have loved, seeing they are innumerable? And why, think we, have the divine poets, who use to hide the truth under fictions, sung the loves of Jove, of Phœbus, of Mars and other their Gods, except it be to give us to understand that Love's puissance is superlative and that his might is invincible? Marry, he

¹ Bandello here seems to confound Iole with Omphale.

who loveth not is no man; wherefore I, being a man, do infinitely love the fair and charming Adelasia. And whoso should say that I do ill to love the daughter of my lord would show himself ill acquainted with the might of love. For all she is an emperor's daughter, her father and mine come both of our lineage of Saxony; but love looketh not to high degree and nobility of blood. How many great and magnificent men have been seen to love women of mean condition and how many ladies of high estate have submitted themselves to base-born churls and the lowest of serving-men? Of this we daily have examples galore, so that I need not be dismayed on this account; more by token that meseemeth I can e'en see that Adelasia loveth me. And perdie, what man was aye so austere, so rigid, so hard of heart and obdurate but that, knowing himself beloved of so charming and lovesome a damsel as Adelasia, he would not only love, but reverently adore her? For that, if the eyes be messengers unto the heart and if the inward desire may be known by their signs, then, indeed, I am very certain that I love not in vain. But how shall I avail to discover my passion, if, whensoever I am near her and think to tell her how I love her, I abide mute and feel myself all a-tremble? Needs must I unknot my tongue and make known to her my poignant cares."

On this wise, then, lived Aleramo and oftentimes be-thought himself how he should do to discover his love. Meanwhile, Rodegonda debated various things in herself, bethinking her how she might secretly avail to satisfy the desire of Adelasia, whom she saw daily pine away for excess of love; and at the last, after pondering many devices, she fixed upon one which herseemed was the aptest and least perilous; wherefore she one day let call Aleramo, under

colour of other business, and after some preamble, discovered to him Adelasia's love, praying him not to confide in any one alive, lest he should mar their affairs. Then she showed him what it behoved him do, to foregather with his mistress; wherefore he accounted himself the happiest man that was aye. On like wise, when Adelasia understood from Rodegonda the order taken for her being with her Aleramo, she could scarce contain herself for joy, saying inwardly, "Now shall I e'en have leisure to abide and discourse with him whom I love more than the light of mine eyes; now shall I e'en be able to tell him what I suffer for him. Marry, I will tell him this and that and will solace myself with him for all my torments."

Nor was her gladness greater than that of her lover, who, the appointed time come, clad himself as a porter and taking a chest on his shoulder, betook himself to Rodegonda's chamber and fortune favoured him insomuch that he was not seen of any at his entering in; whereupon he was straightway hidden by her in a closet where he might conveniently abide. There he put off his mean attire and redonning his own clothes, which were in the chest, awaited the princess's coming with the greatest allegresse he had ever felt. It was the dinner hour when he shut himself in the closet; the which Adelasia learning, she ate little or nothing, for stress of thinking upon her desires. After dinner, she went (as it was oftentimes her custom to do) with certain of her damsels to Rodegonda's chamber and there, after they had discoursed and sported awhile, according to court-usance, she declared herself fain to take a noonday nap. Therewithal she dismissed her women for a while and abode alone with Rodegonda, who, locking the chamber door and opening that of the closet, gave the lovers entrance into those lists whereas one battlenth without danger

of death. When they found themselves together, such was their mutual rapture that they might not for a pretty while speak a word, being overcome with excess of joy, but abode straitly embraced and as they were doves, exchanged a thousand sweetest kisses with inexpressible pleasure. Ultimately, recovering their senses, they discoursed many things concerning their loves ; and ere they departed thence, Adelasia willed to be espoused of Aleramo, resolved to follow him wheresoever he should go. Then, having taken order of the course which they should hold for their departure, they, for the more effectual accomplishment of their espousals, amorously consummated holy matrimony, to the exceeding pleasure of both parties ; and so the gallant Aleramo made his Adelasia a woman from a maid as she was. He abode after shut in the closet and Adelasia, opening the chamber door, called her women and returned to her wonted employment.

During the supper hour, Aleramo, not to be known of any of the court, donned the porter's clothes and departing the palace, with the chest on his shoulder, returned to his lodging, where he fell to setting his affairs in order. Accordingly he sold certain property he had in Saxony, yielding it good cheap, to sell it the quicklier, and giving out that he was minded to employ his monies elsewhere. Then, buying divers precious stones of great value and having certain monies sewn in his doublet, he and Adelasia stole forth the court one night and disguising themselves, with clothes he had provided, as pilgrims on their way to visit the Holy Places, (the princess having first cut her hair short and donned a lad's habit), fared joyously towards Italy, travelling both afoot, to go the better hidden. Marry, it may well be said that the love of these twain was of the purest and perfectest that might be found. I speak not of

Aleramo, for that he was a man, young, strong, robust and inured to arms, the chase and other laborious exercises. But what shall we say of Adelasia, the daughter of an emperor and intended bride of the King of Hungary (then a most puissant king), who, having no regard unto aught that might be, chose rather to go wandering in disguise and to live in exile with her Aleramo than to become a queen? Have you not compassion on her, a youngling maid and delicate, who fareth all day afoot in a churl's habit? But Love, which useth to render difficult things easy unto whoso ensueth him, made all fatigues light to her and caused the annoys and hardships of the perilous road seem to her pleasures and diversions. Wherefore it may verily be said that in all human operations, however difficult and full of toils and mortal perils, whoso doth them for love feeleth no displeasance, for that love is the true and savourly condiment which seasoneth all. Now, let the lovers fare on and God speed their journey.

On the morrow, Adelasia being missed at court and having been a good while sought in vain, great was the outcry and the emperor showed himself infinitely concerned and did nought all that day but seek her ; then, there being no trace found of her nor Aleramo appearing and it being understood from those of his household that he had not been seen that night, all held it for certain that he had carried off the damsel, and the emperor, deeming him gone to his castles in Saxony, sent thither in haste, but could learn nothing ; wherefore he let proclaim throughout all the empire that whoso took him with Adelasia should have exceeding great guerdon. The two lovers were by this at Innsbrück, where they heard the proclamation cried and laughed thereat, being so disguised that themseemed impossible they could be known. Then, departing thence, they took their way

towards Trent and as they fared on merrily, without fear of hindrance, fortune, not content with bringing them down from such a height, contrived them a new and sore mishap; for that, not far from Innsbrück, they fell in with certain highwaymen, who in a trice stripped them bare; nay, but for the coming up of sundry merchants, they had lightly known Adelasia to be a woman. In this encounter, then, they lost all they had and abode well-nigh naked, nor dared they tell that which had been stolen from them, for fear of being known; wherefore they were constrained to go begging, and so they made their way into Italy and came to Le Langhe between Asti and Savona, where there were vast forests. Here poor Aleramo fell to cutting wood and making charcoal and gaining his living poorly, as best he might, and here Adelasia bore her first son, to whom they gave the name of Guglielmo. Brief, not to go recounting every particular of [that which befell] these misfortunate lovers, you must know that they abode more than sixteen years in a grotto of those mountains, making charcoal and sundry other small matters with wood, for that all the Germans are skilful with their hands. During this time they had in all seven male children, of whom the first, being now biggish, went often with his father to Savona and Alba, to sell charcoal and the various toys which they made of wood. All the sons were very goodly and high-spirited and manifestly showed themselves to be no German beggars' brats, but children of noble birth and lineage; more by token that the eldest was so like of favour to the emperor that whoso knew Otho at that age had avouched the lad to be himself.

Now, when Guglielmo was fourteen years old, Aleramo sent him one day to Asti, to sell charcoal and other matters of their fashion, as also to recover certain monies which were owing to him. The lad accordingly went

thither and having sold the goods and received the monies, bought with them a goodly sword; which his parents seeing, they fell a-weeping and said, "Ah, unfortunate child, albeit thou knowest not of what blood thou art born, nevertheless, natural instinct teacheth thee that thine origin is most noble!" Another time he bought a hawk, for which his father sharply reprov'd him, telling him their estate brook'd not the keeping of such a bird; whereupon he departed his home and there being a fierce war toward between the Emperor and the Hungarians, who had made a descent upon Italy and were in act to waste it with fire and sword, he repaired to the Imperial camp. Now he was then fourteen to fifteen years old, well made of his person and much taller than that age commonly comporteth. The war against the Hungarians ended, the Emperor went into Provence to order the affairs of the kingdom of Arles, then a fief of the empire; which done, he entered Italy by way of Liguria and came to Savona, still followed by Guglielmo, who was by this grown a stout soldier.

It chanced, one day, that Guglielmo came to words with a German soldier, not over-far from the emperor's lodging, and they defied each other to single combat; whereupon a captain, so they might fight out their quarrel more orderly and without reprehension, made them pledge him their word of honour [to proceed no farther for the nonce,] engaging to get them a free field and clear of all hindrance from the emperor; wherewith both were content. The captain, not to fail of his promise, took his opportunity and brought the twain one day into the saloon where the emperor was at dinner. Now there was a very old German present, who had oftentimes seen Otho, when he was a boy, and who, seeing Guglielmo, straight-

way remembered him of the emperor at that age; nay, himseemed it was his very self and the more he looked upon him, the more he was taken with his likeness to Otho. There also were others who had companied with the emperor in his youth and they all declared that the lad most marvellously favoured him. The emperor on like wise, seeing himself before him, could not take his fill of looking upon Guglielmo and felt himself all moved to tenderness. Dinner ended, the captain presented the two young men to Otho and said, "Most august emperor, these two soldiers have a quarrel together and have defied each other to void their difference, arms in hand. I have done my utmost endeavour to make peace between them, but in vain, for that this younger one," to wit, Guglielmo, "who accounteth himself affronted, will not hear of it. Wherefore, to avoid the disorders and turmoils which might befall between the companies of which they form part, I have brought them hither to you, so they may of your favour have leave to fight."

The emperor would e'en know the cause of quarrel and having heard it, found that the soldier had sought to take Guglielmo at a vantage and beat him, albeit the effect had not ensued; withal, nature inclining him, as a grandfather, to seek to preserve his grandson, he was loath to have him fight and strove with many persuasions to make peace between them. But Guglielmo knew so well and so aptly to defend his right and showed such hardihood, that the emperor assigned them a field before his own lodging and chose to be himself in person judge of the combat. Accordingly, they entered the lists and for that they had committed to Otho the question of the arms to be used, he let give them each a sword and a left-hand gauntlet of mail and caused them strip to the shirt. Therewithal they joined

battle and after divers venues, wherein Guglielmo, to the general admiration, displayed the utmost courage, the latter, albeit his adversary was older than he and much more practised in arms, showed such judgment and dexterity that, without being touched, he fairly slew the other within the lists. The which much advanced him in Otho's favour, more by token that there were many who declared to the emperor that he himself at Guglielmo's age was of one same stature, complexion, feature and favour as the latter. Accordingly, letting call the youth to himself, he publicly awarded him all such praises as behoved unto his age and the valour shown by him in the field; then with his own hand he dubbed him knight, with a goodly provision, and natural affection urging him farther, enquired what countryman he was. Guglielmo, having reverently thanked the emperor for the honour done him, told how he was son of two poor Germans banished from Almaine, who harboured very poorly in a grotto of Le Langhe, not overfar from Savona.

The emperor, considering Guglielmo's age, bethought him that these might be Aleramo of Saxony and his own daughter, nor could he put this conceit out of his head, albeit Guglielmo called his parents by other names, they having changed their own, so they should not be known; wherefore, ere he chose to depart Savona, he called to him a baron of his, who was Aleramo's cousin, and said to him, "This lad, who hath late so valiantly borne himself in my presence and hath slain his enemy, without losing a drop of his own blood, resembleth me on such wise that many hold him for my son. I have asked him the name of his father and mother, whom he allegeth to be Almains, and albeit he telleth me they pass by other names, I have taken it into my head that they may lightly be Aleramo, thy cousin, and

my daughter Adclasia ; more by token that, whenassoever I see Guglielmo, I feel my blood all astir and take exceeding great pleasure in viewing him and infinite content in speaking with him. As thou knowest, I had otherwhiles determined, if they¹ came to my hands, to wreak myself in their blood ; but now Guglielmo hath rid me of all despite and if they, as I am fain to believe, are alive, I pledge thee my faith, as a true and loyal prince, that I will pardon them all their defaults and accept Aleramo for my dearest son-in-law and Adclasia for my loving and beloved daughter. I will have thee, then, go with Guglielmo whereas he saith these his poor parents sojourn and certify thyself of this my conceit. If thou find them those whom I deem them, bring them hither, so I may do that which I have in mind for their advancement ; and if they be not those whom we seek, do thou nevertheless bring back Guglielmo, to whom I purpose good and honour galore, choosing not that he should resemble me for nothing.”

Then, calling Guglielmo, he charged him bring Guniforte Scombergh² (for so was the baron called) to the grotto where his father abode. Guglielmo accordingly told Guniforte that he was ready to accompany him whenassoever it pleased him to go ; whereupon the latter, making no delay about the matter, took certain of his serving-men and others and set out with him for the cavern. They arrived there betimes and found Aleramo in act to load certain asses of his with charcoal, to go to Asti ; whereupon quoth Guglielmo to Guniforte, “Sir, this is my father,” and dismounting, ran lovingly to embrace him. He knew his son and cousin forthright, but Guniforte did not so soon recognize him ; and what while the latter gazed

¹ *i.e.* Aleramo and Adclasia.

² *i.e.* Schomberg.

intently upon him, striving to recall his favour, Aleramo, moved by the sight of his son, whom he saw thus well clad and arrayed, and fearful, to boot, for that he knew not to what end his cousin was come thither, abode half astonished. However, after awhile, Guniforte, diligently scanning his kinsman's features, recognized him by a little scar he had over the left eye, the which had been given him at sword play by one of his fellows, what time he learned to fence; and albeit Aleramo was poorly clad, smoke-blackened, lean, bearded and so disfeatured that he showed like one of those chimney-sweepers who come from the lake of Lugano, nevertheless, Guniforte judged him to be his cousin and dismounting, cast himself on his neck and weeping for joy and pity, said to him, "Thou art e'en Aleramo my cousin; hide thyself no longer; thou hast been over-long hidden and it is time that thou return to thy first, ay, and greater than thy first estate."

Aleramo, thereupon, somewhat reassured, straitly embraced Guniforte and they wept together awhile. Now there were some in company with the said Guniforte who had been Aleramo's vassals in Saxony and who all, knowing their lord and finding him thus ill in case, reverently inclined themselves before him, weeping. Aleramo abode in suspense, unknowing the end of his cousin's coming; algates, seeing his son so well accoutred and the caresses which his cousin so lovingly lavished on him, himseemed he might hope for nothing but good. Meanwhile Guglielmo had run to call his mother, who was in act to wash her clothes at a spring hard by the cavern. When she saw her son richly clad, as he were some great prince's son, she left the clothes and running to embrace him, kissed him tenderly a thousand times, weeping for joy; where-

upon quoth Guglielmo, "Mother, here is the lord Guniforte Scombergh come hither, on a special errand from the emperor, as you shall hear from himself." At this Adelasia was troubled, for that she knew not to what end the emperor had sent for them, Guniforte not having chosen to tell Guglielmo aught. However, hearing her husband call her by her proper name, which had thitherto abidden unknown to her very children, she was somewhat reassured and went with her son to meet the baron and his company, who came towards her.

The princess might then have been some three-and-thirty years old and was, like her husband, very poorly clad and all embrowned, inasmuch as she also handled the charcoal, putting it in sacks and helping to load it; nevertheless her fairest lineaments still showed through the mask of poverty and majesty breathed from her lovesome countenance, the poor raiment availing not to hide the royal and generous fashion of her soul. Guniforte, drawing near her, did her reverence as humblest he might, no whit as to a cousin, but as to an empress's daughter and his sovereign lady and mistress; whilst she received him with courteous and most gracious welcome and on like wise did she with all those who were with him. The pretty children (six in number, without Guglielmo) all ran whereas they saw their father and mother, and albeit they were very ill to do in the matter of apparel, nevertheless, they were all very handsome and showed themselves by their graceful aspect come of a noble and generous stock. Guniforte then related the occasion of his coming and all that had happened to Guglielmo, whilst Aleramo and his wife abode a pretty while mute and Guglielmo and his two eldest brothers, who were one thirteen and the other fourteen years old, were filled with infinite allegresse and wonderment. I

know not which was greater in the two lovers,—joy at the recovery of the emperor's favour or shame at the thought of going before him, albeit they accounted it glory to have been found in so poor a way of life.

Guniforte, not to tarry longer in that place, mounted Aleramo and Adelasia upon two hackneys which he had brought thither in hand, whilst the children he let mount behind his attendants; and so he carried them to lodge that night at the nearest village, having first advised the emperor of all, who rejoiced exceedingly in his new-found daughter and son-in-law. Moreover, he sent that same night to Savona, to fetch clothes for the whole family, and on the morrow, a bath having been made ready, they were all washed and well cleaned; and being after nobly arrayed in rich raiment, they seemed nowise charcoal-burners, but showed that which they were, to wit, princes. All the people of Savona and all the barons of the court came to meet them, at their entering in, and received them as be-seemed the daughter and son-in-law of such an emperor; whilst Otho himself, so all the world should know that he had heartily forgiven them their every default, descended the palace stair and tenderly embraced his daughter, his son-in-law and his grandchildren, one after another. Aleramo and Adelasia fell on their knees before him, craving him mercy of the offence committed against him; whereupon he raised them up and embraced them anew, kissing them both in token of clemency and bidding them speak no more of the past. Then, causing all seven of his grandsons, (of whom the eldest was the valiant Guglielmo and who made a very goodly show,) forego him, he took his son-in-law and his daughter in his either hand and mounting the stair with exceeding great allegresse, brought them into the saloon, where they fell to holding high festival.

All the ladies of Savona were assembled at the palace and there the emperor willed that the festivities should endure for eight whole days, saying that it was his daughter's nuptials that he celebrated. Ultimately, being constrained to return to Almaine, he made all his seven nephews, the sons of Aleramo and Adelasia, marquesses. The first, (who, as you know, was called Guglielmo) he made Marquess of Monferrato; to the second he gave the Marquisate of Savona, with many lands, and from him are descended all the marquesses of Carretto, of whom the Marquess of Finario is nowadays head; the third, whose lineage yet endureth, had Saluzzo; the fourth engendered the family of the marquesses of Ceva; the fifth was Marquess of Incisa, where his seigniory endureth to this day; the sixth had the Marquisate of Ponzone and the seventh that of Bosco; but Otho willed that Aleramo and Adelasia should abide lords and marquesses of the whole what while they lived. Aleramo thus saw all his sons in exceeding great estate and he and his wife lived long in the utmost contentment, whilst his lineage hath endured in the male line unto the present day, with the exception of the house of Monferrato, which ended in a lady, who married a son of the Emperor Palæologus of Constantinople, and now likewise the house of Pakeologus is come to an end in the person of the Duchess of Mantua, with whom it will be regrafted upon the most noble stock of Gonzaga. Thus do families go failing and changing, there being nothing stable or constant under the moon's sphere; the which teacheth us that we should not stablish our thoughts here below, but turn them all to the sky.

Bandello

to the most magnificent Messer Marcantonio
Ciglio.

I have ever, since the beginning of our friendship, wished for some opportunity of giving you to know how much I love you and how desirous I am of making you some return for the many kindnesses which you, of your favour, do me all day long. Now, it being discoursed, no great while ago, of the cheats which are put upon jealous folk and of the many disorders whereof jealousy is the cause, whenas it taketh hold upon a man of little wit and he useth it ill, Pietro Galetti, by birth a Pisan, but abiding in Sicily and bred at Palermo, related, to this purpose, a merry chance befallen at Lucca, the which, meseeming it was worthy to be added to my other novels, I wrote down; wherefore, it having presently come to my hands, I send it to you, as an earnest of my desire to approve myself grateful to you, and dedicate it to your name. It may serve you, an you come to marry, [teaching you] that you must, without waxing jealous and blinding yourself with so dire a malady, govern your wife adroitly and with true conjugal love, giving her no occasion to spare the household gear and spend that of others; nor do I write you this without cause, inasmuch as it is most whiles the husband who giveth occasion, one way or another, unto his wife to do that which she should not. Fare you well.

The One-and-Twentieth Story.

THE JUDGE OF LUCCA LIETH WITH A
LADY AND LETTETH PUT HER HUSBAND
IN PRISON ; TOGETHER WITH VARIOUS
INCIDENTS.

At the time when Pietro Gambacorta ruled over Pisa,¹ there was a lad of very noble family, called Buonaccorsio Gualando, who, having neither father nor mother, fell enamoured (and that much more ardently than sorted with his boyish age) of Beatrice, daughter of Neri Malletti, who was then a young girl, and she on like wise became without end enkindled with love of him. No sooner was Buonaccorsio out of school than he addressed himself to see and be with his Beatrice, and for that they were both children, (the lad being mayhap twelve years old and the girl having scarce accomplished her tenth year,) none of the kinsfolk took heed to their familiarity. After awhile, the lad's kinsfolk, who had him in tutelage, seeing that he made good profit in grammar² and was of high understanding, determined to send him to Siena, where the study of the civil law then flourished with great renown, and acquainted him with their intent, showing him that, albeit he was of ancient and noble race and of the first families of Pisa, he had no great

¹ Pietro Gambacorta, tyrant of Pisa, was assassinated in the year 1392 by his secretary or chancellor Jacopo Appiani.

² *Grammatica*, i.e. in the Latin language and literature.

substance and it behoved him use his abilities for the maintenance of his rank. The boy, hearing this and seeing that they spoke sooth, told them that he would do whatsoever they should enjoin him; but, on the other hand, bethinking him that he must part from his Beatrice, he was sore chagrined at heart; wherefore, coming to privy discourse with her, he acquainted her with the determination to which his guardians had come concerning him and the dolour which possessed him by reason thereof. The girl, hearing this, fell a-weeping bitterly, whereat he also wept and embracing child-wise, they drank each other's hot tears. They pledged their troth to love each other always and what while Buonaccorsio abode in Pisa, they were all day together. Now the lad had a factor at home, to whom (with Beatrice's foreknowledge) he committed the care, by means of a poor neighbouring woman, of conveying to Beatrice the letters which he should write from Siena and of sending her answers to himself at Siena.

The time of departure come, Buonaccorsio went to Siena, where, ere he returned to Pisa, he was kept of his guardians three whole years. He had without cease his Beatrice in remembrance and often wrote to her; and she, who loved him on like wise, sent him letters whenas she might, for that, instigated by love, she had learned to write very well. Love waxed in both with age and they ceased not to hold frequent commerce by letters till the end of the third year, when the youth returned to Pisa at vacation-time and found his Beatrice marvellously grown in stature and beauty; indeed, she was very fair and charming and so quick-witted that she had not her match in all Pisa. Buonaccorsio saw her at a window and she seemed to him so infinitely fair and love-some that he abode all astonied. Now, they being both grown, it was no more permitted them to be together

familiarly, as of old time ; the which was a cause of sore chagrin to the two lovers ; but Love, who never leaveth his followers without some aid, opened their eyes and showed them how they might speak with each other in a very lonely alley behind Beatrice's house, at a window not over-high, which gave light to a place where faggots and other household necessaries were kept and where also were two great vats for making wine. Thither, accordingly, Beatrice resorted bytimes and solaced herself at her leisure by talking with her lover ; for love, which had begun between them on childish wise, now burned in their hearts after another fashion and they loved each other on such wise that they would fain have foregathered and taken that amorous pleasure which is so ardently sought of lovers ; but they had no commodity therefor.

What while their love thus waxed with their waxing years, Buonaccorsio, the vacations ended, returned to Siena, where he abode other three years, without returning to Pisa ; and the time drawing near of his coming home, Neri¹ Malletti married his daughter at Lucca, giving her to wife to a citizen of that place, by name Fridiano Z. Buonaccorsio, hearing this, fell into such a melancholy that he was like for despair to turn friar ; but, after he had already spoken with the father superior of the Franciscans at Siena and appointed a time for donning the habit, he had a letter from his Beatrice, who wrote him that, being constrained of her father, she had been unable to refuse to marry, but that she loved him more than ever and that now she would have more liberty than before and would find means to foregather with him, so but he would make shift to abide in Lucca ; and to this she exhorted him the more as herseemed she had in those

¹ Dim. of *Rinieri* (Fr. Regnier).

few days observed that her husband was a man of little wit. The young man was somewhat comforted by this letter and read and re-read it an hundred times; then, repenting him of his intent to become a friar, he applied himself to finish his studies and that same year made a public repetition¹ with such commendation of all the University of Siena that he speedily obtained the doctorate of civil and canon law; whereupon he came to Pisa and to get him reputation in his native place, put forth a great number of theses and argued them with subtlety, to the satisfaction of the whole city. However, being unable to put his Beatrice out of his thought, he resolved to do everything to have the office of Criminal Judge in Lucca, the which was a post of authority and high consideration, and accordingly wrought to such purpose, by means of his kinsfolk and friends, that he was presently elected judge for two years; the which was a source of exceeding great contentment both to himself and to Beatrice.

Having gotten the appointment, he provided himself with that which he needed, so he might make a worshipful appearance, and repaired, in the month of January, to Lucca, where he took possession of the office with all pomp and ceremony and proceeded to exercise it on such wise that in a few days he acquired the favour of the whole city. He being thus at Lucca and seeing his fair Beatrice well-nigh every day and both being minded to foregather, the lady, having bribed two of her women, contrived by their means to give her lover access to her, whilst Fridiano was abroad in the country, and so they culled the much-desired fruit of their long and fervent love. My lord judge, if he loved

¹ *Fice una solenne ripetizione*, or (as we should say) "underwent a formal examination."

before, was now all passion, having found his Beatrice far lovesomer and more gamesome than he looked for; whilst she, on her side, having tasted her lover's embraces and finding them brisker and more delectable than those of her husband, was all afire for Buonaccorsio and if before she had little love for her husband, now she had him in such distaste that herseemed he stank at every pore, so that she accounted herself ill to pass what week she foregathered not twice or thrice with the judge.

Now, their commerce being carried on somewhat less than discreetly, Fridiano became exceeding jealous of Buonaccorsio. He saw that he was a very goodly youth and passed daily along the street, and himseemed moreover that, when Beatrice saw him, she was all rejoiced and showed him an over-blithe countenance; wherefore he came oftentimes to hard words with his wife and did nought but tell her that she had an amour toward with the judge and that by the body of the Holy Countenance,¹ he would say and he would do [this and that]. The lady, knowing what her husband availed, answered him sharply, railing at him for saying such things to her and telling him that he was vastly mistaken, inasmuch as she was plainly certified that my lord judge frequented that street for a widow, their neighbour, whom he loved, but that this must go no farther, lest it should injure the latter's reputation; moreover, she added that, if he had so ill an opinion of her, he might keep such watch as he would over her and that, if he found she did him wrong, he might deal with her as most liked him. The husband, though not the shrewdest man in the world, was

¹ A vulgar way of swearing by the *Vera Icon* or true semblant of Christ's features, as fabled to have been impressed on St. Veronica's handkerchief, with which she wiped the sweat from his face, as he was carrying his cross to Calvary.

nevertheless so enamoured of his wife and saw her so fair and so forward that he thought every fly that flew in the air would steal her from him ; wherefore he listened to no excuse that she might make, but, bethinking him without cease how he might provide for his occasions, took it into his head that his wife must give him somewhat in his meat or drink, to make him sleep fast by night, and after arise and open the door to her lover, and himseemed that, could he but find a remedy for this, all would go well.

Accordingly, he called one of the waiting-women and said to her, "Harkye, Giovanna," for so was the woman called, "if thou be faithful to me and keep my counsel, thou shalt see what I will do for thee. I misdoubt me sore of my wife and the judge and methinketh she maketh me sleep anights with some deviltry she giveth me and after ariseth and openeth the door to her gallant ; wherefore I will have thee dress my food and draw me wine, for that I will take nothing except at thy hand ; but look thou be faithful to me." Giovanna, who was cognizant of the amour between the judge and her mistress, hearing this extravagance, said, "Sir, it is my duty to do whatsoever you may command me and in this I will nowise fail you. I do not indeed believe that madam is of such a sort, or meseemeth I should bytimes have remarked it ; but were she as you deem, it would avail you nought to keep a watch over your eating and drinking, for that the Pisan ladies, by that which I heard there, what while I abode with the Lanfranchi family, are mostly well versed in incantations ; and I remember to have heard tell there that, whenas one sleepeth, if the lady touch him with her hand and bespeak him with certain words which they learn on the night of the Nativity, he sleepeth as many hours as she saith the words times."

Fridiano, hearing this, abode as one dead and himseemed

he was already put to sleep by Beatrice's enchantments ; wherefore, "Alack," quoth he, "what is this I hear?" And Giovanna, "Sir, as I have said, I do not believe that madam is one of those who work malefices ; algates, the proverb saith that good watch fendeth ill hap. Methinketh (if, indeed, there be aught in the matter) the judge entereth not by the door, but overpasseth the garden wall and climbeth up to where the faggots be and thence cometh aloft and goeth to your chamber." Poor Fridiano believed the artful wench's tale ; wherefore, having advised with her of the case, he determined to keep watch in the garden that night ; and she, at her first commodity, punctually reported the whole to her mistress, who, hearing her husband's extravagant conceit, made shift to have counterfeit keys of the house-door and advised the judge of all. Then, if before she showed her lover a good countenance, she fell to showing him a yet better, on such wise that the wretched Fridiano, waxen madly jealous and giving entire credence to Giovanna, dared not go to sleep beside his wife, for fear of being enchanted and determined to apply diligently to the watching of the garden. What while he counted the stars in the open air, the lady, for her better assurance, let shut a certain door that gave upon the garden, so he might not re-enter the house without her knowledge, and admitting the judge, made with him the conjunction of the planets. Moreover, to give better colour to the thing, what while the judge was abed with his mistress, a serving-man of his, who had accompanied him thither, went round about the garden, now spitting, now whistling and now doing other like acts and whiles making a feint of offering to overpass the wall, which was not over-high, so that the poor jealous wretch abode all night on the alert, firmly believing him to be the judge, come to visit his wife ; but, seeing that he climbed not the

wall, he misdoubted him the judge knew that he kept watch and was at a loss what to do. Then, as soon as the judge had taken his departure, (the which was still an hour or two before dawn,) the lady let open the door leading into the garden; but the jealous man left not watching till past daybreak.

The thing went on this wise many days, till Fridiano, getting no sleep, save a little by day and eke bytimes anights in the garden, became lean and haggard and seemed as he were possessed; nay, who had not become thus, passing as he did so many nights in baying the moon? Ultimately the judge, to quit both himself and the lady of suspect, hatched with her a fine plot, which prospered him to a thought. He had among his serving-men a young Pisan, tall and very robust of his person, who was commonly surnamed Ferraguto¹ and had entered upon whatsoever perilous emprise at a sign from the judge; he was chief over certain officers, of those who go about all night to see that none fareth armed or without light. To him quoth Buonaccorsio, "Ferraguto, as thou knowest, I love the wife of Fridiano Z. and she loveth me; but I cannot visit her, as we would wish, she and I, for the strait watch which her husband keepeth anights. Nay, for that it were a great commodity for me to pass through the garden, he still abideth there armed, so that I cannot draw near thereto but he is at the wall foot, with a partisan in his hand. Marry, armed though he be, I warrant he could do thee little hurt, for that he is so pursy and scant of wind that he hath not the strength to pierce a cheese-curd. Now I will have thee tell thy men how thou hast it from thy spies that an outlaw

¹ Apparently in allusion to his size, Ferragut being a well-known giant personage of the Charlemagne Romances, who is slain by Roland.

passeth through the garden anights and that thou hast a mind to take him. It behoveth thee first of all scale the wall and descend into the garden ; whereupon he will doubtless attack thee, but can do thee little hurt. Leave thy fellows order to follow thee, and I will presently be on the spot with the rest of the watch ; so we will take him and after I will do that which I have in mind and which will avail to cure him of jealousy." "Sir," replied Ferraguto, "this is a small matter you command me. Leave me do and fret not yourself with trifles ;¹ it sufficeth that you tell me the time whenas you purpose to present yourself."

Accordingly, the hour being appointed and the lady advised of all, my lord judge that day passed twice before her house and made of set purpose certain signs with his eyes, laying his hand upon his breast and spitting after a certain significant fashion, so that Fridiano, who abode on the look-out and had noted all the signs, held it for certain that he was to come that night to visit Beatrice. Whereupon, unable any longer to suffer such an annoy or to brook that the judge should so impudently signal his wife, he made a great outcry about her ears, and said to her, in the presence of her women and of one of the serving-men of the house, "Wife, wife, thou goest to such lengths that, by the body of Our Lady of Montenero, I shall slit thy weasand, and if this judge of thine pass through the street anights, I will lead him such a dance that he shall remember him of me all his life. Thou wouldst fain play the wanton with him and set me the stews at the door ; but I will not suffer it. An you be Pisans, I am a Lucchese. Let me catch thee again at any of the windows which give on the street, and thou shalt see how things go." The wily lady, who knew

¹ *Covelle*, in modern phrase, "details."

full well that which her husband availed and what he could do, answered him forthright, saying angrily, "What a devil is this you say, husband mine? What words are these that you use so inconsiderately? What have you seen in me that should put these maggots into your head? You give yourself out, for no fault of yours or mine, for an ill man and me for a lewd woman, and withal there is no harm toward. Methinketh you doat. Where have you learned that the judge of this city may not pass day and night through every street and enter what house soever he will, seeking to do his office? Marry, I have heard you yourself say that this same judgeship is an office much feared and respected. Have a care how you talk." Whereupon, "Look you," cried Fridiano, flying out into a violent rage, "here is this Pisan traitress come to Lucca, bent upon ruling me! Would I had been abed with the quartan ague the day it entered my head to take a wife from Pisa, for that all there, all, men and women, are traitors! May fire come from heaven to burn thee up, vile woman that thou art!"

Beatrice, who made little account of her husband, answered, to enrage him the more, "By Christ His Cross, you are a fine fellow to speak thus and to offer to even yourself with the Pisans! He knoweth not what Pisa is and that which the Pisans have done by sea and by land, to compare with the Lucchese! Go to; my father was mighty blind to take you to son-in-law. Cursed be the hour when I took you to husband! You are more mis-doubtful than a gelded mule, for the proverb e'en saith sooth that the Lucchese are fearful of the flies that flit through the air. Perdie, apply yourself to live and you will do wisely; and look you offer not to lay hands on me to beat me, for that I will not brook it from you and will tear your eyes out of your head with these

fingers. I have done nothing that you should threaten me thus. Give cuffs to the dogs and let me be." In fine, words waxed many between them and for one Fridiano said, his wife answered him half a score.

The night come, the goodman supped before the rest of the household and arming himself, repaired to the garden, where he abode on the alert, thinking to play the judge an ill turn, an he offered to climb the wall. Meanwhile, Buonaccorsio let arm his company, saying that he meant to go take an outlaw¹ whom he knew by espial to be in a certain place; then, sending Ferraguto in advance with his troop, he followed with the rest and went about the city, awaiting the stroke of the given hour and not straying far from Fridiano's house. When the bells gave the appointed signal, Ferraguto, having lessoned his men, set the ladder against the wall of the garden, where Fridiano lay in wait, and climbed up; but, as he offered to descend, he felt himself wounded, but not deeply, with a spear-prick in the thigh; whereupon he leapt down and cried in a loud voice, saying, "Traitor, thou art dead!" Now he had a great partisan in his hand and with this he fell to belabouring Fridiano on rare wise, but still flatlong. Poor Fridiano, never doubting but it was the judge, struck blindfold at him with the spear, but Ferraguto parried his thrusts without difficulty; then, his fellows having by this made their way down into the garden and the judge coming up, he cried out, saying, "In, in; we have found the outlaw!"

Ferraguto's men had already broken in the garden-door and taken Fridiano, when my lord judge, entering, asked where the outlaw was. "Here he is," replied the sergeants,

¹ *Bandito*, lit. a banished man.

who had not yet perceived that the prisoner was Fridiano. "Praised be God!" quoth the judge. "Come, let us to court." Whereupon Ferraguto, knowing how the thing stood, let himself sink to the earth, as if exhausted, which one of the others seeing, "Alack," cried he, "Ferraguto is dead!" At this speech the judge turned and seeing his officer's thigh all bloodied, said, "The villain hath slain Ferraguto; but he shall pay doubly for it." Then said Fridiano to him, "I am no outlaw, but Fridiano Z., a citizen of this city." "How?" cried the judge. "Thou art Fridiano? And what didst thou armed at this hour? Come, lads; do three or four of you carry Ferraguto home and call the doctor; you others have a care Fridiano escape not, and let us search this house, for we shall find the outlaw there." Accordingly he entered the house with some of his men and finding all arisen at the noise, called for lights and searched everywhere. Finally, he called the lady before him and threatening her severely, said to her, "Madam, tell me the truth; where is the outlaw who came hither to-night?" "Sir," replied she, weeping bitterly, "it is many a day since any lodged in our house. I know not what you mean with your talk of outlaws." "Enough," quoth the judge; "you shall speedily learn what I mean; I will soon make you confess the truth by means of torture. Certes, that is true which was told me many days ago, to wit, that you are an ill woman and never speak sooth." "Sir," said she, "I am a Pisan like yourself and an honest woman." Whereto, "It irketh me," rejoined he, "that you are a Pisan; but needs must I do my duty, be it who it will cometh to my hand." Then he bade carry Fridiano to the court-house, together with his wife, two women and a serving-man. The lady fell to making the sorest lamentation in the world and feigned to offer a stout resistance;

but, availing no more than she might, needs must she suffer herself to be carried off.

Poor Fridiano, seeing and hearing these things, said in himself, "Verily, I was greatly mistaken to think that the judge loved my wife; these be no lover's toys;" and knew not what to say. With these his thoughts, he was clapped into a prison where snakes would not have harboured and his servant was put in another place, whilst his wife and the two women, who were both cognizant of her amour with the judge, were lodged in a chamber, where she abode very commodiously and there my lord judge, the better to examine her, lay with her on amorous wise the rest of the night. Meanwhile, Fridiano abode in dire concern, misdoubting him he should suffer sore punishment for wounding a sergeant of the court and being found in arms at that hour. He asked the guardians of the prison what was come of his wife and one who knew him said to him, "I heard my lord say that he meant this morning to put her to the torture of the rope,¹ to learn where you have lodged the outlaw who came to your house yestereve. She cannot fare other than ill, for this my lord judge is very severe; moreover, there is Ferraguto whom you have grievously wounded and who will give you ado enough." Fridiano, hearing this, abode full of exceeding great fear and it may not be told how much it grieved him to have so thoughtlessly made an enemy of the judge, more by token that, firmly believing that his wife was to be tortured, he felt his heart like to burst; whilst the judge, learning that which he had said of him, laughed amain thereat with Beatrice.

Next morning, the arrest of Fridiano and his wife, being bruited abroad throughout Lucca, gave occasion for the

¹ *i.e.* the strappado.

saying of many things, and if there was e'en some suspicion of the amour between Messer Buonaccorsio and Beatrice, this circumstance altogether extinguished it. There came many of Fridiano's kinsmen and friends to speak with the judge and enquire the cause of his imprisonment, and he answered them that, having advice of a parlous knave of an outlaw, who was in Fridiano's house, he had gone thither with the police, to take him, and that Fridiano had not only abetted the villain's flight, arms in hand, but had wounded one of the officers; whereat they all abode aghast and knew not what to say. Awhile before dinner the judge let bring Fridiano before him and asked him if he knew the reason why he was incarcerated. The poor man answered, for that he had wounded one of the police. "Good," quoth the judge; "what didst thou at that hour armed in cuirass and sallet,¹ halberd in hand and sword at side, in the garden?" Fridiano, unknowing what answer to make to this, cudgelled his brains in vain, but could find no excuse that might avail. "Look you," quoth the judge, "I will reserve me to give thee the strappado for a last resource, for that I mean first to examine thy wife and her two waiting-women, together with thy serving-man; after which I shall look to know of thee the truth, which I warrant thee it shall behove thee tell me, wilt thou, nilt thou. Go and take good thought to thine affairs and give me not cause to deal harshly with thee and put thee to the torture, for that I am loath to use my authority and the severity of the laws against the citizens."

Thereupon he let carry him back to prison and proceeded to examine the serving-man, who could say no otherwhat than repeat that which he had heard Fridiano

¹ *Celata*, a light helmet.

say to his wife, when he taxed her with being enamoured, and acknowledge it to be true that Fridiano had for many nights past armed himself and gone into the garden. The judge caused his notary write down the man's whole deposition and particularly the injurious words which Fridiano had spoken of himself and his threats to kill him. Thereafter he let fetch Beatrice, who confirmed the servant's confession, adding, to boot, that her husband had many a time told her he was determined, at any cost, to kill the judge; and the two women, being examined in their turn, deposed to the words which had ultimately passed between Fridiano and his wife. These depositions taken and reduced by the notary to writing, the judge, after dinner, repaired with Beatrice and the notary, who was all his own, and two trusty serving-men, to the place where they use to torture criminals; but first he let put Fridiano, with shackles on his feet, in a chamber hard by, whence he might lightly hear all that was said there. Now he was resolved to use his utmost endeavour to cure the jealous man of his jealousy and to do away every suspicion which Fridiano might anywise have of him; wherefore, having first fully possessed the lady of all that he purposed to do, he said in a somewhat loud voice, "Come, no more words; bind this woman to the rope and hoist her up. I will soon make her confess the truth." Thereupon Beatrice threw herself on the ground and cried out with a feigned tearful voice, craving mercy and saying, "Sir, I know no otherwhat than that which I have told you: you do me wrong; woe's me, mercy! For God's sake, bind me not so hard!" The judge feigned to give no ear to her speech and said still, "Come, make no more delay; hoist her up." The men shook the rope and she, drawing back somewhat, cried out for mercy

as most she might ; whilst the judge rated her, saying, "Beatrice, tell me the truth if thou know aught of the murder which thy husband had it in mind to do. What sayst thou?" She sobbed and shrieked and said somewhat unceasingly to apprehend, as do those who are sore tormented ; nor was it long ere the judge said, "Body of Christ, but I will make thee confess the truth ! Thou wilt not speak ? Ay shalt thou, in thine own despite. I will soon take the obstinacy out of thy head ; ay, perdie, will I, nor will I have regard to thy being a Pisan. Hoist her well up and let her fall with a good jerk, for I am resolved that this stubborn woman shall tell me the truth or leave both her arms fast to the rope." Now there was a piece of wood bound to the rope, which made it appear as if some one were hauled up and down, and Madam Beatrice shrieked aloud even as do the tortured.

The wretched Fridiano knew his wife's voice, as she screamed and craved mercy, and after he had twice or thrice certified himself that it was e'en his Beatrice, he began to cry out like one frantic, saying, "Alas, mercy, my lord judge ! For God's sake, strappado not my wife ; torment her no more, for that the poor soul is nowise at fault. You weary yourself in vain, forasmuch as she cannot say that which she knoweth not. Alack, dear my wife, good my wife, chaste my wife, why am I not tormented in thy place?" The judge, hearing this and seeing the thing ensue as he designed it, feigned not to know that Fridiano had been put in that chamber and turning angrily to his men, said to them, "Who put Fridiano in yonder chamber ?" "Sir," answered one, "you committed him this morning to the lieutenant of police." "I committed him?" cried the judge. "God give thee an ill year ! I was misapprehended ; I hade bring him

hither, after this woman had been strappadoed, and not before ; for it bescemeth not that he hear what the others confess under the torture. Now carry this woman back to prison and when you return hither, bring me the keys of this chamber, for I mean to examine Fridiano."

The lady, laughing at the cheat put upon her husband, went to her chamber to abide with her women, and the judge, the keys being come, let fetch Fridiano and said to him, "I know not an thou have heard that which thy wife hath said. She would fain have remained obstinate, but this rope made her in part tell the truth, and I hope that she will presently tell all, whenas I shall have her hoisted up once more. Thy serving-man and women have been wiser and have told all they know, without enforcing me do them a mischief. Now thou art here, an thou wilt tell the truth, speak ; else this," showing him the rope, "will make thee tell it in thine own despite. I wish to know from thee what outlaw it was thou hadst in thy garden, whom when my officers would have taken, thou causedst him flee and to boot woundedst one of my men, for that thou wentest not armed at that hour and place to husk chestnuts. Thou wilt do well to tell the truth." Fridiano, who was more dead than alive, fearing to be maimed by the strappado and bethinking him that to be armed in his own house, to watch that none came to lie with his wife, was no hanging matter and that he had wounded Ferraguto in self-defence, said, weeping, "Sir, I will tell you all. For God's sake, torture me not ! The truth is I believed you to be enamoured of my wife, meseeming I had seen certain signs which led me to that conclusion ; nay, I came several times to high words with her thereanent and threatened her severely, declaring that I would slay both her and you, an I found

you in my house ; wherefore, misdoubting me you entered the house by way of the garden, I have abidden there many nights on the watch. Moreover, whenas your men came thither, I, taking him who climbed the wall for yourself and thinking to kill you, attacked him and wounded him, meseeming it was lawful to defend myself in my own house and hinder any from entering against my will. Marry, I have no otherwhat to tell you, for that indeed I have no commerce with outlaws nor do I know that any have ever entered my house."

The judge caused the notary write all this down and said to him, "How deem you thereof, Messer Paolino?" For so was the notary called. "Indeed, my lord," replied the other, "he is liable to the capital penalty, for he heard the sergeants cry out, 'Take the outlaw, the outlaw!' and yet he attacked Ferraguto, a minister of justice. Nay, he confesseth, to boot, that he thought to strike your own person, the which is *crimen læsæ majestatis*. Methinketh, except you deal mercifully with him, he will lose his head therefor, first for having hindered the taking of the outlaw and after for having wounded your officer, both which be capital matters, according to the ordinance of this magnificent city. Nay, what is more, he hath confessed that he armed himself yesternight, with deliberate intent to kill you, and abode awaiting you ; and in these matters of homicide the doctors say that the will is reputed for the deed." To this speech of the notary, my lord judge, seeing Fridiano more dead than alive for fear of losing his head, replied, saying that he had spoken mighty well and that he would look into the statutes, but that needs must Fridiano first have half a dozen bouts of the strappado, to purge himself of the suspicion of having hindered the taking of the outlaw. Fridiano, hearing this, was like to die of fear and knew not

what to say. He was then carried back to prison and his kinsfolk, who sought to succour him, understanding how he had of his own motion confessed to having awaited the judge many nights, arms in hand, with deliberate intent to kill him, were sore concerned, themseeming the matter would not go overwell and that the judge in this case would proceed with rigour ; nevertheless they failed not to take due measures in his behalf. Meanwhile, he abode in strait duresse, at once in fear of his own life and in concern for his wife, whom he thought all crippled by the strappado. But she lived joyously and had gotten never a jog of the rope, except maybe she was jogged anights upon the feathers, for that the judge, fearing lest overmuch sleep should mar her, jumbled her many times a night and played with her the game of clips.

However, Messer Neri Malletti, the lady's father, being advertised of the arrest of his daughter and her husband and of his son-in-law's confession, procured divers letters from Signor Pietro Gambacorta and from Messer Buonaccorsio's kinsfolk and despatched them to the judge by the hand of a Pisan notary, who was the latter's creature and had drawn up the settlement of Madam Beatrice's dowry, upon the occasion of her marriage. The messenger accordingly came to Lucca and took up his lodging in the house of the judge, by whom he was very lovingly received. Messer Buonaccorsio, then, seeing Signor Pietro's letters and those of his own kinsmen and friends and knowing how the notary loved him, acquainted him with the whole ordinance of the matter and discovered to him his amours with Madam Beatrice. Fridiano had now been some eight days in prison ; wherefore the judge, to make an end of the matter, let bring him one evening before himself and in the presence of the Pisan notary, bespoke him thus, saying, "I know not, Fridiano,

what offence I have ever given thee, since I came to this magnificent city, that thou shouldst (as I learn from the confessions of thy wife and thy servants and from thine own lips) have studied with such rancour and persistence to compass my death. Tell me, what injury hast thou suffered at my hands that thou shouldst abide so many nights armed and lie in wait for me to kill me? May I not, then, in the exercise of my office, go freely about the city, both by day and by night, whereas I most know need and occasion to be? Nay, grant that I have a mind to go thither anent matters foreign to the magistracy, but for some private occasion of mine own, or that maybe I love some gentleman not pertaining unto thee and would fain go lie with her, what should it concern thee? Shall I then be hindered of my privy pleasures and holden in constraint, as are children? But, to return to our case; I was advised, some days since, that one who is banished from this city had passed through thy garden and gone I know not whither; wherefore, in the exercise of my office, I sent to take him and thou attackedst the chief of the watch and gavest him a wound, thinking, as thou hast confessed, to slay not him, but myself. Now I purpose to carry out that which the municipal laws and statutes of this city require; firstly, I will to-morrow have thee put to the strappado, so the depositions may be completed in due process of law, and after I will do with thee that which is done with assassins."

At these words the affrighted Fridiano cast himself at the judge's feet with joined hands and said, weeping, "If your patience, my lord judge, suffer you hearken to me, I doubt not a jot but that, whenas you have heard the truth from me, you will judge that I am not so guilty as you presently esteem me and that you will have regard to the innocence of my dearest wife, who in this case is without any manner

of fault and deserveth, poor soul, to be set free." The judge thereupon made him arise and said to him, "Well, say what thou wilt, for I will hear thee patiently. What hast thou to say?" Fridiano accordingly rose to his feet and said, "Sir, as I have already told you, I suspected you of loving my wife, for that, whenas you made your entry this past January, you at once began to pass very often before my house. I, knowing myself possessed of a very fair wife (a possession which useth not to afford so much delight anights but that it causeth far greater annoy by day), misdoubted sore of your case, you being a Pisan and a well-favoured youth, more by token that I saw in you and in her certain matters which made me think that your loves had had beginning elsewhere. I now know that I was mistaken; but, when my wife told me that you were said to be enamoured of a neighbour of ours, I believed it not; whence ensued that whereof I told you the other day. Wherefore meseemeth my case is worthy of compassion and that I might go armed as it pleaseth me in mine own house. Marry, an you wished to pass through the garden, you should have sent me word and not have sought thus to scale my wall at unawares; for, being, as I was, in such suspicion, what else could I do? And you, what would you have done? As for my wife, now that you have so cruelly tormented her, you may be assured that you have ill-used her without reason, she being nowise at fault." Then said the Pisan notary, "Fridiano, thy father-in-law hath sent me hither to see how I may procure thy liberation and that of thy wife, with as least shame and hurt to thyself as may be possible. I have seen thy process,¹ which is

¹ *Processo*, i.e. the depositions, forming the record upon which an arraignment is founded.

exceeding foul ; algates, I will confer with my lord judge and do as best may be." Fridiano thanked him and prayed him lose no time and was presently carried back to prison.

The judge, the lady and the Pisan notary then took counsel together of what was to do to make an end of the business and concluded that the notary should go visit Fridiano in prison and procure him to crave leave as a favour to speak with his wife ; the which was duly carried into execution. The lady, who had made herself pale with sulphur-fumes, so that she showed as one come forth of the grave, was accordingly brought in to her husband, with tears in her eyes, accompanied by the Pisan notary. When Fridiano saw her thus pallid, he embraced her, weeping, and craved her a thousand pardons for his suspicions of her, promising her, if ever he won forth of prison, she should be mistress over all, since he now knew her for an honest and virtuous woman. She feigned herself all palsied and made as if she could not move ; whereat he bemoaned himself sore, saying, "Dear my wife, sweet my soul, my treasure, my only comfort, forgive me, for I know I am the whole cause of thine ill. Alack, my life, how dost thou?" She still played cunning¹ and answered him, in a weak voice, that she was all broken and could hardly speak. Then said the notary, "Harkye, Madam Beatrice, you must lose no time, what while you have leave to speak with your husband ; I had much ado with the judge ere he would consent to your foregathering. I will tell you briefly my deeming concerning your case. That which is past may not be undone ; nay, God Himself, who might have hindered its betidement, cannot, after the event, render it unbetided ; wherefore let us leave things past and take thought to things

¹ Lit. "played the dead cat" (*faceva la gatta morta*).

future. I have seen the proceedings in your matter and indeed your deposition, Beatrice, and those of the waiting-women and the serving-man much aggravate the case, to say nothing of thy confession, Fridiano, through which, an Ferraguto die, thou wilt lose thy head; and if (which God grant) he die not, thou wilt have a hand lopped off and an eye put out and wilt be banished for three years. However, I hope he will recover. Let us, then, cast about for a means of saving thee from mutilation, the which, meseemeth, might be compassed by the payment of a thousand gold florins to the fisc."

Fridiano, hearing this, said, "The thing goeth less ill than I feared; having with mine own lips confessed that which I have said, methought I should certainly fare much worse; algates it is a grievous matter for the like of me to pay a thousand florins. I ply no trade nor have I any craft in hand, and my revenues scarce suffice me for the maintenance of my household, from year's end to year's end. But methinketh, if Antonio here,¹ who made our marriage-settlement, would draw up an instrument, purporting to bear date three or four days after the execution of the latter, I would make thee, wife mine, a donation in writing *inter vivos* of all my property and so render myself unable to pay [the amercement;] and when once I am out of prison, all may be arranged." Beatrice thereupon urgently besought the notary to do her that kindness and he, after suffering himself to be long entreated, ultimately promised to do it; maybe it was not the first instrument of the kind he had made. Accordingly they agreed that Antonio the notary should speak with the judge and study, with the aid of the letters he had brought with him and by the use of such other

¹ Apparently the name of the Pisan notary.

means as should commend themselves to him, to procure the sentence to be a lenient one.

Therewithal the lady and the notary departed the prison and returned to the judge, who, hearing Fridiano's wish to make the donation to his wife, turned to the latter and said to her, "Madam, this is a happy thought for you, for that you will henceforth be mistress of all and needs must your husband abide with you, nor will he ever more dare to find fault with you. Marry, the thing goeth well, thanks to God's grace. We shall have cured Fridiano of the excessive jealousy into which the poor man had fallen and shall have brought matters to such a pass that there will be no more ado in the house. Ferraguto is whole, for that the hurt was not in a dangerous part, and meseemeth it is time to liberate Fridiano. Wherefore, in the first place, you and your women and the serving-man shall go home betimes tomorrow morning and after dinner I will pronounce judgment to the following effect, to wit, that Fridiano Z., for having wounded an officer of the court and wrongfully hindered the taking of an outlaw, be sentenced to pay the expenses which Ferraguto hath incurred for medicine and tending and be to boot bounden to execute for a whole year the office of [inspector of] contrabands,¹ without any salary. And if the sentence seem light, I will say that, at the instance of Signor Pietro Gambacorta and of many other my friends and kinsmen, I have not chosen to proceed with such severity as I might and that this penalty which is inflicted on him, to wit, of executing the office of [inspector of] contrabands for a year without salary, is for having resisted the officers of the court; that for the rest (which are my private injuries) I heartily remit him the whole, in favour of the letters of

¹ Apparently, an officer charged to see that goods liable to duty were not smuggled into the town.

recommendation which I have had from my friends and kinsfolk."

This done, the good judge, according to his usance, kept his mistress company that night and they laughed together again and again over the cheat put upon Fridiano, Beatrice declaring that the sheepshead had come off overcheap. Then, Messer Buonaccorsio, being minded to take order how they should avail to foregather in the future, said to her, "Look you, sweet my soul," and so saying, he kissed her two hundred times, "I will have Fridiano serve a year in the office which he shall be condemned to execute, for that it will behove him be ahorseback all day in the suburbs, and whenas meseemeth good, I will keep him four or five days abroad, so we may be together at our pleasure and without disturbance. Nay, when he is in the city, I will e'en contrive that he shall abide four or five hours of a night with the watch in one or other quarter, whence it shall not be permitted him stir without my leave and licence; and meantime I shall be able to come pass an hour or two with you, so that we will lead the merriest life in the world, what while I abide in this office. What say you thereof, heart of my heart? Is not our affair well ordered?" The lady, who loved him no less than she was beloved of him, answered him with a thousand sweet and amorous kisses, saying, "Ay, sweet my lord, you have done excellent well and I am manifestly certified that you love me heartily, and I also love you more than my very life." On this wise the two lovers passed the night in amorous pleasance and dulcet talk, and in the morning, the lady returned home with her women and serving-man. Meanwhile, the Pisan notary betook himself to the husband and said to him, "Fridiano, thou mayst presently thank God that thou chancest to have a Pisan wife; for that, but for her, I know not how thou

hadst done to scape the loss of a hand and an eye. But the letters her father hath procured to be written from Pisa have availed thee to such effect that thou wilt this day be liberated from prison and mayst go home at thy leisure. Thou wilt be sentenced to pay for the medicines that Ferraguto hath taken and the physician for healing him, which will be but a trifle ; and for the rest of the penalty, it will behove thee execute the office of Captain of Contrabands for a year, without receiving any salary from the exchequer. It is a goodly office and thou wilt derive much advantage therefrom, forby that thou wilt oftentimes be able to serve thy friends. Marry, for the love of Messer Neri thy father-in-law, I have wearied myself amain about the matter. The judge was much incensed against thee and meseemeth indeed he had good cause, for that thou soughtest to take his life, without his having offended thee. He recketh of thy wife as of a thing that he never saw, for that his love is (as I know) bestowed elsewhere. Thou must, then, thank him amain and abide all thy life long beholden to him, for woe to thee, had he done thee the ill he might !”

Fridiano, hearing this good news, thought himself raised up from death to life and thanked the Pisan notary without end. Accordingly, after dinner, my lord judge took his seat on the bench at the customary hour and having first done all such magisterial acts as were required of him, he pronounced final judgment in the matter of Fridiano Z. Moreover, to lay him under greater obligation to himself, he suffered him not pay a penny for prison fees or other charges, nor, whereas he should have reimbursed Ferraguto what little he had spent, would he have him pay him aught ; wherefore the good Fridiano was no sooner free from prison than he went to throw himself at the judge's feet and thanked him infinitely, declaring that he should still be master of

himself, of his good and of all he had in the world. The judge rendered him due thanks and gave him to understand that he was greatly beholden to his father-in-law, who, by favour of Signor Pietro Gambacorta, had procured him his liberation. Moreover, he exhorted him to prepare himself to execute the office which he had assigned him and to do it with all diligence; to which Goodman Fridiano answered him that he would study his utmost to do himself honour and would still be his servant and order himself in all things according as he should command. Then he went home and could not say enough to his wife in praise of the judge; and amongst other things, "Wife mine," quoth he, "I will have my lord judge come to our house at any and every hour, without any manner of ceremony, for that he is a man of great worth, and we are all vastly beholden to him; nay, had he chosen, he might have done us great hurt." The lady confirmed all he said and would have Antonio, the Pisan notary, draw up the act of donation, what while she saw her husband in this good disposition; the which the good notary did, with all such clauses as the judge knew to put therein. Thereafter, so well did things go for the two lovers that, for the two whole years of Messer Buonaccorsio's judgship, they foregathered whensoever they would; and so pleasing was this commerce to the judge that, the two years ended, he found means to be lieutenant of the provostry;¹ nay, after, being beloved of all, he was e'en made provost; and such was the good opinion that Fridiano had of him that not only would he have refused to credit whoso had missaid to him of him, but, had he e'en seen him and his wife in each other's arms, he had not believed his own eyes.

¹ Lit. "vicar" (*vicario*), *i.e.* Deputy-Provost.

Bandello

to the excellent doctor of medicine Messer Atanasio degli Atanasi.

Age useth to bring many and various incommodities unto those who wax old ; nay, not only doth it bring these, but itself, as wisely saith the comic [poet,] is a corruption of all the members of the body, and to boot, it engendereth a thousand ills in the human mind. But let us leave all its other incommodities and its many vices (inasmuch as, when an old man is not of a well-ordered and generous mind and suffereth himself be carried away by the lusts of the flesh, a long Iliad might be composed thereof) and let us speak only of the disease of ambition, whenas it layeth hold upon an old man, especially if he have been poor and chance in his old age to have amassed some sum of monies. The wretch, never looking back neither considering how long he hath lived, hath regard only unto the future and deeming himself presently in the flower of his years, goeth imagining a thousand vain conceits and rearing a thousand castles in the air ; nay, as if he should live as long as he hath already lived, he either setteth himself to build superb palaces, thinking to enjoy them long, or goeth about to take a wife and being himself threescore years old, will have her fifteen, perceiving not that, were he put in a press and squeezed to the utmost, one might not extract an ounce of sap from his

flesh ; or else, having one foot in the grave, he must needs buy dignities and offices, though, ere he can enjoy them, he dieth and loseth his monies and eke his life. The poor old man, being in his dotage, thinketh himself a Solomon, and so it betideth him even as it befell the ass, who, thinking his long ears to be two great horns, accounted himself a very stag, but, in the jumping of the ditch, he fell to the bottom and perceived but too well that he was an ass. Now, it being lately reasoned of such foolish old men in the presence of our noble countrywoman, the Lady Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, my patroness, Monseigneur Alain de Frigemont, of the house of Montpessat, who useth often to visit her ladyship, related a pleasant story ; which I straightway committed to writing, mesceming it was worthy of remembrance. Thereafter, thinking to add it to the number of my other stories, I have chosen that it be still read and seen under your name, in token of my love for you and eke to the end that (as said Monseigneur Alain, the teller of the tale,) men may take warning thereby and beware of embarking upon such extravagance out of season. Fare you well.

The Two-and-Twentieth Story.

CARLO SAVONARO¹ PUTTETH A CHEAT UPON
HIS UNCLE AND WITH THE LATTER'S
MONIES MAKETH HIMSELF COUNSELLOR
OF TOULOUSE.

Following on the subject whereof it hath been spoken, you must know that in Toulouse, a very ancient and populous city, there was no great while ago a priest and doctor of the canon law, by name Messer Antonio Savonaro,² who was very rich in benefices and so tall of his person that there was no man found in all those parts but he overpassed him by the head and shoulders ; so that he was known of all for his tallness and was still regarded as a marvel. He was made Official to the Archbishop,³ and being very churlish and crabbed and harsher than right required, he got himself such a name through all the country that every one styled him the muckle churl of the thirty ribs ;⁴ which coming to his ears, he was mightily chagrined thereat and fell into such a passion of choler that he might nowise suffer it. He bethought him again and again how he should do to rid himself of this name, and the more he showed himself

¹ *i.e.* Charles Savonières.

² *i.e.* Antoine Savonières.

³ *i.e.* Judge of the Archiepiscopal Court.

⁴ The common people apparently supposing him, on account of his great bulk, to have more than the normal number of ribs.

angered thereat, the more berhymed was he in Toulouse and the boys went singing about the streets, "The muckle churl of the thirty ribs;" whereat the poor man was like to go mad. Ultimately, after he had raved amain thereat, he let publish an interdict throughout all the diocese of Toulouse, to the effect that whoso dared to style my lord the Official "the muckle churl of the thirty ribs" should be excommunicated and accursed of God and the Saints. The folk, enraged, rather than dismayed or amended by the interdict, did no otherwhat than sing day and night, "The muckle churl of the nine-and-twenty ribs and a half." This was the axe which cut Savonaro's neck and he was like to go mad, seeing he might not avail to rid his ears of that foul name and being unable to go anywhither but he still had the unseemly refrain cast in his teeth; wherefore, after much casting about how he should do to quit himself of that annoy, he bethought him that, if he might win to be made a counsellor of the parliament, none would any longer dare to call him by such a name.

Accordingly, he sent for a nephew of his, Carlo by name, who had no great while before been made doctor of laws, and said to him, "Nephew, thou hearest the unseemly words which are spoken of me all day long and which I can no longer suffer. I have four thousand pounds tournois¹ ready money, wherewith I will get me to the court and buying me a senator's place, will rid me of this foul name." The nephew, seeing his uncle in this extravagant humour, albeit he was over seventy years of age and had little longer to live, answered him, saying, "My lord, you are old and should think more of dying than of living; attend to your present office and go not about to die and throw away your

¹ About £400 sterling.

monies."¹ At this the old man fell into the greatest rage in the world and called his nephew rascal and sorry knave; then, refusing to hearken to any counsel, he set out to go to Paris, where the court then was. Carlo, knowing this, followed after him at half a day's distance, so that where the uncle supped, there the nephew dined the next day.

The old man, being come to Paris, went to lodge at the Chateau de Milan;² which Carlo learning on his arrival next day, he went to another inn and in two days' time clapped up a friendship with an archer of the king's guard, who seemed to him apt to do that which he desired. With him he agreed for the price of four crowns, and the archer, being fully instructed of that which he was to do, repaired to the official's hostelry and understanding that he was in his chamber, betook himself thither and knocked at the door. Antonio asked, "Who is there?" and the other answered, "I am an archer, come to speak with my lord the Official of the Archbishop of Toulouse on the king's part." The old man, hearing this, came to meet him and said, half affrighted and with a trembling voice, "What is your will?" Quoth the archer, "The king greeteth you; follow me;" and turned to leave the chamber, repeating in an arrogant tone, "Follow me, follow me." The poor old man, more dead than alive, said, "Wait, wait; what would the king with me?" But the archer repeated with a stern air, "Come, let us be going, my lord; despatch." "Alack, for God's sake," cried the official, "know you what he would with me?" "Enough," replied the archer;

¹ Sic (*non audate a morive e buttar via i danari*), the meaning is, "Do not waste your monies in purchasing an office, which you cannot long live to enjoy."

² An inn of that name.

“let us be going and keep me no longer waiting.” Then, the old man still beseeching to know what was to do, he said to him, “I will tell you; but keep it me secret. The king would fain make his company of archers of the tallest men in France, and it hath been told him of you, who are in truth a goodly man and will make a fine show with a halberd on your shoulder. Now come, let us be going.” The old man, thinking to pay with his heels, said, “Go you, and I will come to court.” “No, no,” rejoined the archer, “needs must I accompany you.” Thereupon there passed many words between them and in fine the archer got ten ducats to leave him be. The man gone, Savonaro let saddle his horses and returned in all haste to Toulouse, saying the while, “Que te calé, Antoyne Savonières? Que te calé? Tu eres officio et estaves plan; que te calé? Certes, un vicit d’ase [pels¹] pots.”² These are words of our Gascon dialect and mean, “What lackedst thou, Antonio Savonaro, what lackedst thou? Thou wast Official and abode at thine ease. What lackedst thou? Certes, an ass’s pizzle over the chops.” Arrived at Toulouse, he fell sick and died, with these words [on his lips;] whereupon Carlo his nephew inherited the four thousand pounds and other gear galore and buying him a counsellor’s place, is presently alive and senator of the Parliament of Toulouse, having by his ready wit contrived to hinder his uncle from throwing away his monies, worn out as he was with old age.

¹ I insert this word (meaning “on” or “over the,” pl.), which appears necessary to complete the sense.

² *Pels pots*, lit. “over the lips.” The exact meaning of this Provençal speech is not clear; but the drift appears to be that Savonières felt that he deserved a buffet for leaving his comfortable place to run after chimæras.

Bandello

to the illustrious Seignior Ciano Fregoso.

It is daily made manifest to us how great is the difference between men and men and we see their natures and inclinations to be so various that they are oftentimes at disaccord in all their actions. And as we seldom find two who resemble each other in features and bodily fashion, even so yet rarelier will both be of one mind in everything; nay, if they agree in one thing, they will differ in opinion concerning many others. One still findeth a difficulty in every action and everything which is toward, however easy and lightly put in execution, and will with his arguments depicture it to thee on such wise that he will make that which is possible appear to thee impossible and cause thee despair of accomplishing thy desire. Another, on the contrary, hath his mind so fashioned that he thinketh nothing to be impossible, and the more difficult the accomplishment of the effect which he seeketh, the easier doth he repute it and is nowhit disheartened by whatsoever contrary argument you may oppose to him; nay, oftentimes, aided by the vivacity and acuteness of a soaring wit, he effecteth without overmuch difficulty that which all deemed might never be accomplished. Men of this fashion are commonly high in favour with great masters, who still seek to do that which is well-nigh impossible, and yet more acceptable unto the common folk, who,

seeing an emprise deemed well-nigh impossible of achievement compassed by their means, believe them more than human, though, if they knew the subtlety of man's understanding, wonderment would cease in them. It was debated of this matter by sundry gentlemen of the household of my patroness, the Lady Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, the occasion being afforded us by Pitigliano Siniscalco,¹ who never answereth nay unto anything which is required of him, albeit the effect seldom ensueth upon his words. Command him what thou wilt; he will still answer that it shall be done, be that which is required possible or impossible; wherefore, in the course of the talk, Messer Stefano Coniolo, Canon of Agen, related a goodly anecdote, which pleasing me, I wrote it down and will have it seen of the public under your name, so it may bear eternal witness of my observance unto you. Fare you well.

¹ Apparently the lady's steward or majordomo (*siniscalco*), though Bandello gives *Siniscalco* as his surname, as above.

The Three-and-Twentieth Story.

THE ABBOT OF BEGNÉ MAKETH A PIG-ORGAN
AND BY HIS PROMPT REPLY UNTO HIS
KING, QUITTETH HIM OF A DEMAND.

Being last year at the court at Amboise on the affairs of the bishopric, I heard a gentleman of Auvergne, who was very old and alleged that he had been page to King Louis XI., tell many memorable things of the said king. Amongst the rest he related how he took marvellous delight in those who accounted nothing impossible to be put in execution, albeit the desired effect did not always ensue, and how it pleased him above all that a man should apply himself to essay what might succeed. Wherefore, the lord abbot of Begné, who was a man of exceeding wit and a most excellent musician, debating one day, in the presence of the said king, of the virtue of music and of the sweetness of harmony, the king asked him, by way of jest, if, since he had invented two or three fashions of music, never before known, he might contrive to make a harmony of pigs, thinking the abbot would say no. The abbot, hearing the king's question, abode nowise confounded and bethinking him forthright of how he should do, answered him very briskly, "Sire, so you will let give me the monies which will be required for the making

of this music, I will engage to produce you a most marvellous harmony, resulting from the voices of many pigs, which I will cause sing in regular order." The king, desirous to see the issue of the matter, caused one of his treasurers count out to the abbot that same day the monies he asked, whilst all marvelled at his undertaking and declared that he was mad to set himself upon such a venture, inasmuch as the king had agreed with him that, an he failed of producing the aforesaid porcine music, he should repay him the monies he had received from the treasurer, but if he succeeded, he was to keep all. However, the abbot answered all those [who thus blamed him] that they were men of little spirit and knew not to do aright and that they accounted all which they knew not to do to be impossible.

Now he had stipulated for a month's time to make the music in question and thereupon bought two-and-thirty pigs of various ages, choosing eight of them for the tenor, eight for the bass, eight for the soprano and eight for the alto. Then he made him an instrument with keys after the fashion of an organ, fitted with long wires of copper, to the ends whereof were certain very sharp steel points made fast on cunning wise, the which, the keys being struck, pierced such pigs as he chose; wherefrom there resulted a marvellous harmony, he having let bind the pigs under the keyboard of the organ, according to the required ordinance and on such wise that they must needs be pricked at the touching of the keys. Of this his instrument he made proof five or six times and finding that it succeeded to him excellent well, he, four days before the appointed term, invited the king to hear the porcine music. The king was then at Tours with all his court and desirous to see and hear that harmony, repaired to the

abbey of Marmoutiers,¹ founded by Saint Martin, where the abbot had made all ready and where, seeing a pavilion set up and an instrument after the fashion of an organ attached thereto, they all abode wondered, unable to conceive what manner of thing it was and still less what was under the pavilion. Each took his place and the king bade the abbot do his office; whereupon the latter, going up to his instrument, fell to striking the keys, like as one playeth the organ, on such wise that, the pigs grunting according to the order in which they were touched and pierced, there resulted therefrom a goodly consonance and a music never yet known, but marvellously delectable to hear, for that the abbot, who was an excellent musician, played divers goodly preludes and certain motetts masterly composed. The king took very great pleasure therein and not content with one hearing of the new music, would have the abbot repeat it twice or thrice; wherefore he and all his lords and others who were present at the concert judged that the abbot had perfectly fulfilled his promise and commended him amain therefor. He let raise the pavilion on one side, so he might see the ordinance of the pigs, and noting how they were bound and the ordinance of the copper wires with the steel points, sharp as any needle, he marvelled amain and judging the abbot to be a man of high wit and very great invention, rendered him such praises as himseemed so rare a contrivance merited.

This is the same abbot (to tell you another trait which I have heard of him) who with a prudent response contrived to save himself and keep his abbacy. The said King Louis XI. desired above all to gratify a certain foreigner with an abbey and there being none then vacant, he called

¹ Bandello "*Mamostier*."

this Abbot of Begné to him and prayed him consent to renounce his abbacy, for that he would give him an equivalent pension till such time as another should fall vacant. The abbot, knowing [the value of] that which he held and hearing his king's proposition, straightway replied to him thus, saying, "Sire, it hath cost me forty years' labour ere I might avail to learn my A, B, C;¹ I beseech you give me as much time to learn the rest." The king understood the abbot's prompt and goodly response, which meant that he had been made abbot forty years ago and would fain enjoy the abbacy as long again and that, having an assured revenue, he cared not to run after the royal treasurers to recover his pension, the which is oftentimes a grievous annoy. This reply pleased the king and he let him enjoy his abbey in peace and made other provision for the foraigner.

¹ *i.e.* abbacy. Bandello "A, B," *i.e.* a play upon the sound of the word abbaye, which would in French be exactly similar in pronunciation to the first two letters of the alphabet.

Bandello

to the right affable and illustrious seignior Signor
Marco Pio di Carpi.

The eyes wherewith the high heavens look down upon the earth,¹ whenas, at their brightest and bluest, purged of every cloud, they show us their eternal beauties anights, by the radiance of the clear silvern moon, are not so numerous nor are the flowers which fair Flora, in the Spring time, goeth cunningly enamelling with the goodliest natural colours nor the fruits which sweet and savourly Pomona bringeth, season by season, to maturity so many and various as the effects which flattering and many-snareful Love produceth in the hearts of simple mortals, whenas with his venomous flamelets he enkindleth them on various wise, for it is manifest that, according as love cleaveth unto various temperaments, even so diverse and various ensue thereof the actions of men in love. Indeed, I should belike say that it is not love which produceth certain outrageous extravagances which are bytimes done of many, but the suffering ourselves to be overcome of our passions. Wherefore I am fain to believe (and it pleaseth me to be of this opinion) that it is unlawful to blame Love, whenassoever an ill-starred lover heedlessly doth aught out of due course, for that the

¹ *i.e.* the stars.

fault is not Love's, but ours, who, as I have already sung,¹ know not how to love. Now every one knoweth that the object of love is the thing which is called loveable, the which can nowise be conceited otherwhat than all that seemeth to us good, apparent good being (as all the wise will have it) the true and proper object of our appetite. Accordingly, no sooner doth this apparent good present itself unto our senses and flatter them than the greedy appetite, drunken with pleasure, straightway turneth towards it, as the giddy butterfly to the beloved light; whence there is born in us a certain complacence and delectation which is commonly called love. This complacence, to speak logically, it would be incorrect to call desire, albeit it is the beginning thereof, forasmuch as from the motion it maketh towards that which appeareth to it good, desire springeth without doubt, as doth the rill from the fount; wherefore the master of those who know² hath left it written that all desire and lust after the fair and the good, to wit, that which appeareth to us good and fair. When, then, it is reasoned of this affection, which we call Love, it behoveth that it be understood, not of the complacence aforesaid, which so sweetly delecteth us, but of the movement [towards the desired object], which, according to divers considerations, we should rightly name desire. From this undoubtedly ensueth that the thing apparently good is the true object of love. Now, this same thing may appear to us good in various ways, now under colour of virtue, now clothed with that mantle which delight useth to proffer us and whiles

¹ Referring, apparently, to some poem of his own, with which I am not acquainted.

² *i.e.* Aristotle. *Il maestro di color che sanno*, Dante, Div. Comm.; Inferno, IV. 131. But Bandello apparently refers to Plato in his "Banquet."

under the veil of profit, which latter we see all mortals so eagerly desire and go seeking at the cost of so many toils and travails and such exceeding perils. But of these three kinds of love, which are the sum of all, that which is allured by the profitable and attracted only by the thought of the advantage which may be derived therefrom, stablisheth itself therein and there maketh its end, is far less [worthy] than that which armeth itself with virtue and cleaveth fast thereunto and eke than that other which draweth and ravisheth our souls to itself, nay rather cajoleteth and overfloodeth them with pleasure, by means of delight. Beyond these three loves, (leaving divine love for the nonce out of the question,) I am convinced that there is none other to be found, for that, if one offer to reason of animal love or of love bestial, wild-bestial and eke natural, all these, to my thinking, (such as it is) may, albeit they depend upon various causes, be referred to the three aforesaid. But, alack, whither have I suffered myself be carried away? For that in truth I have thoughtlessly strayed into this discourse. Alas, it misliketh me not to have said so much to you thereof, for that, you being in the fair flower of your youth, it cannot but supremely advantage you that you should oftentimes call to mind the sage saying of fortunate and magnanimous [Scipio] Africanus to King Masinissa, to wit, that there was less peril for the youthful age in the armed hosts of its enemies than is proved to befall from the carnal delights of love, so that there is far more glory and honour to be gained by conquering one's amorous passions and oneself and shunning the wanton pleasures which unnerve and emaciate the young than is to be gotten by overcoming all the armies in the world. I have accordingly set myself to write to you, that I might show you how love whiles blindeth and falsifieth our senses and oftentimes maketh us

see one thing for another. Now, it being reasoned of late of the many delusions into which wretched and imprudent lovers run headlong, our most affable Signor Carlo Attellano, who is, as you know, a pleasant and goodly speaker, related, in the presence of the most urbane and courteous Signor Alessandro Bentivoglio, your honoured uncle, an adventure befallen in the city of Milan. The case appeared to me worthy of being consecrated unto eternal remembrance, for the admonishment of young men who unwarily suffer themselves to be ensnared. I wrote it down incontinent and it occurred to me to give it to you, in token of our mutual goodwill. You, in this your flower of youth, are the more in peril of falling into the amorous involvements, inasmuch as your age, temperament and natural bent seem all to incline you to love ; wherefore I would have you live warily and look your liberty be not stolen from you. An easy thing it is to stumble into the abyss of servitude ; but to turn backward and recover the dear lost liberty is a far harder matter than some believe. Do you, then, accept this my little gift and impart it to the gentlemen your brothers Costanzo and Girolamo. May our Lord God long preserve you all !

The Four-and-Twentieth Story.

THE LOVES OF MESSER GIAN BATTISTA
LATUATE AND THE AMOROUS DELUSION
WHEREIN HE WAS INVOLVED, TOGETHER
WITH THE SPRIGHTLY RESPONSE OF HIS
MISTRESS.

There be many, (more's the pity,) most worshipful madam, who, whenassoever I would speak of my native place Milan, grudge to hearken to me, especially if I offer to praise that city, and who, nevertheless, remembering them not to have bytimes chidden me for wishing to extol my own country, fall at unawares into the folly of seeking to exalt divers native places of theirs above the stars, though God knoweth if they deserve to be commended. And if I ask them why they will not have me speak well of my native place, they can make me no other answer than that the Milanese speech is more clownish than any other which is used in Lombardy and they are even not ashamed to call it fouler than the Bergomask. But I never found (to speak generally) that the Germans used other than their own fashion of speech and the French that of France, and so every nation speaketh its native tongue. I will not say that the court-speech is not more polished than the Milanese, for that methinketh I should tell an untruth; but I am fain to believe that no primitive language, used after the fashion of its birth, is

good. Take the Tuscan, the Neapolitan, the Roman or whatsoever other you will; all, without exception, need to be diligently purged and polished; otherwise they all savour somewhat of the clownish and offend the listeners' ears. Even so on like wise methinketh the Milanese speech is in itself uncultured, but may lightly be polished. Algames I should not think to blame whosoever speaketh his native tongue, which he hath sucked in with his mother's milk from his tenderest years. The first Cardinal Trivulzio, who was born and bred in Milan and was made a cardinal, when an old man, went to abide at Rome in the days of Pope Julius the Second and speaking, could not hide his origin, so purely did he speak the Milanese dialect. It was told him by many that he ought to change his speech and accustom himself to the language of the court; whereupon he answered them, smiling, that, if they would show him a city better than Milan and more abounding in everything, he would learn the idiom thereof, but that he had never yet heard tell of another Milan. And indeed he spoke sooth, for that, at the binding of the bales,¹ there are few Milans to be found; wherefore, on the word of a gentleman, to say that which I sincerely feel on the matter, I, who have gone so many years wandering about Europe and Africa, reckon Milan to have few equals among cities and few that are so abundant in everything necessary unto human life. Wherefore Ausonio Bordegalese,² in his catalogue of cities,³ most marvellously commendeth it and maketh it well-

¹ *i.e.* when one cometh to pack up for travel.

² The reader, unaccustomed to Bandello's erratic fashion of treating non-Italian proper names, will hardly recognize, under this style, the well-known Latin poet of the fourth century, Decimus Magnus Ausonius of Bordeaux (Burdegalensis).

³ *Ordo nobilium urbium*.

nigh the equal of Rome, in the days when Rome had as yet received no hurt from the barbarians, but flourished entire and fair. If, then, a Gascon poet praise it, I hold it should not be forbidden me to do the like, whenassoever the occasion offereth itself.

I say, then, that in Milan, rich and abounding in every good thing and inhabited by a numerous and gallant nobility, was a lad called Gian Battista da Latuate, left very rich by his father's death and brought up under the care of his mother, a very noble matron of the Caimi family, who used all diligence and solicitude in rearing that her only son on gentle wise, so he should grow up adorned with excellent manners, no less than with good letters. The lad waxed and flourished and being presently fifteen to sixteen years old, gave great promise of becoming an accomplished gentleman, for that he consorted with other young men of his own rank, exercising himself amain, now a-horseback, now in the tennis-court and now at the fencing-school and showing himself marvellously apt at the manage of all kinds of arms. He had, as he yet hath, his paternal mansion in the Brera Street and riding often apleasuring through the city, now on mules and now on high-mettled horses, it chanced one day that, as he passed through the Borgo Nuovo quarter, he espied a damsel sitting at a latticed casement, to see who passed through the street. Himseemed he had never beheld so fair and lovesome a girl and he was indeed so dazzled and captivated with her at first sight that he could turn his head to no otherwhat ; wherefore he passed twice or thrice before the house that same day and still saw her in the same place. The more he saw her, the more himseemed beauty and grace waxed in her, and making enquiry by one of his serving-men concerning her father, he learned that he was a gentleman of no great estate, but a man of worth and good repute.

All that day and the ensuing night the enamoured youth thought of no other than the girl he had seen and all his ideas were fixed upon one sole object, to wit, how he might win to speak with her. He began, accordingly, to court her every day, now a-foot and now a-horseback, and whensoever he saw her, which was well-nigh every time he passed through the quarter, he did her obeisance, bonnet in hand, and ogled her on such wise, with his eyes fixed upon her, that whoso saw him had lightly perceived his enamourment. The damsel, being very courteous and well bred, whensoever the young man doffed his bonnet to her, modestly bent her head somewhat and with a blithe aspect rendered him the honour received; which afforded Gian Battista marvellous solacement, himseeming she disdained not to be loved of him. This commerce lasted some days, the youth becoming daily more enamoured and knowing no rest save whenas he saw her; and he presently found means to send her, by an old woman, a love-letter, wherein he told her how ardently he loved her and addressed her in such strenuous and impassioned words as such new-fledged youths commonly use to write to their mistresses. The damsel accepted the letter and read it, but returned him no answer; whereupon the enamoured Gian Battista wrote her another letter, full of amorous protestations and humble supplications, and besought her with the utmost instance to be pleased to vouchsafe him a privy audience, so he might possess her of many things which would be dear to her and which were not to be committed to writing.

It nowise displeased the damsel to be courted and loved by so noble and rich a youth, and albeit she was no match for him, she hoped withal he might lightly become so infatuated as to take her to wife. She was very quick-witted and well-advised and plainly apprehended the

import of his talk of a privy audience; wherefore she wrote him again, thanking him for the love which he said he bore her and avouching that she also loved him in so far as pertained unto a virtuous maid, but that, as for having privy audience of her, he must never hope it, for that such audience was reserved by her unto him whom her father should give her to husband. Gian Battista, having this discreet response and being bitten by the amorous tarantula, whose venom had penetrated deeply into his heart, felt himself wax yet more enkindled and went the more from ill to worse that the damsel, every time she saw him, showed him a very blithe and favourable countenance and seemed to take pleasure in letting herself be seen of him. Being, then, at this pass and seeing no remedy for his love, he inwardly determined to speak to his mistress's father and demand her to wife. Accordingly, taking his opportunity, he sought out Messer Ambrogio [for so was the gentleman called] and saluting him, said to him, "Sir, not to waste time upon fine words and ceremonies, I will speak with you frankly. I know that you know who I am and that you have no need to go seeking information of my circumstances; wherefore, an it please you give me your daughter Laura to wife, I will gladly espouse her, for that she hath long marvelously pleased me and I am firmly resolved to marry her."

Messer Ambrogio marvelled amain at this proffer and knowing the great wealth and nobility of the young man, who might, as he knew, have found a much better match, with higher rank and more substance, in Milan, abode somewhat confounded, but presently replied to him thus, saying, "Signor Gian Battista, I have [as you say,] no need to take information of your circumstances, knowing

full well who you are, and therefore I cannot but marvel amain that you should stoop to take my daughter, who, though indeed noble by birth, is yet the child of a poor father, for that my means are such that I cannot by a long way give her the dowry which behoveth unto you." "Speak not to me of dowry," quoth the lover; "I have gear enough, Godamercy, for her and for me and ask of you neither marriage-portion nor otherwhat, save only Laura herself, unto whom I will appoint a sortable dowry, such as pertaineth unto the like of me. Do you, therefore, consent to give me your daughter and have neither care nor concern for the rest. I would fain have my mother know nothing of the matter for the nonce; but, for your assurance, I will espouse Laura in the presence of four or five of your nearest kinsfolk." "Sir," replied Messer Ambrogio, "it were well that, in a case of such import, you should take five or six days' more thought thereto and I likewise will consider mine affairs." Quoth the youth, "Take it that the six days are passed, for that I have long thought upon this matter and am determined to do that which pleaseth me." "Well, well," rejoined Messer Ambrogio; "another day we will speak thereof more at leisure;" and so they parted and the ardent and impatient lover wrote his mistress all that had passed between her father and himself; whereat she abode wonder-glad.

Meanwhile, Messer Ambrogio, turning over the young man's proffer in his mind, misdoubted him lest, thinking to make friendship and alliance, he should rather acquire an eternal enmity. He knew the inequality between the parties and judged that such a marriage ought not to take place; wherefore, having long and diligently pondered the whole matter, he found means to speak with Madam

Francesca, the enamoured youth's mother, and punctually recounted to her all that had passed between himself and her son. The lady was sore chagrined at such ill news; withal, she thanked Messer Ambrogio heartily for having given her to know of her son's intent and exhorted him to marry his daughter without loss of time. The poor gentleman shrugged his shoulders and excused himself for lack of means, saying that Laura was yet a child and that the time was unapt thereto. Madam Francesca asked him how much he was wont to give his daughters to dowry; whereto, "Madam," answered he, "I have married two and have given each a thousand ducats. I have now but Laura left and wish to give her the same, whenas it shall be time; for that, an I sought to marry her at this present, I might not avail to pay an hundred florins." Then said Madam Francesca, "Messer Ambrogio, so you may know how much I am beholden to you for the advisement you have given me of my son's purpose, look you out a fitting match for your daughter, (the sooner, the better,) and I will lend you the whole thousand ducats of the dowry, the which you shall at your commodity repay me in five or six years; nor will I have of you otherwhat than a writing under your hand." For this courteous and bountiful offer Messer Ambrogio returned such thanks as best he knew and promised the lady to use all diligence to marry Laura; and so they abode of accord.

Gian Battista the while still solicited his Laura with letters and messages, passing through the street whenassoever commodity offered, and every time he espied her at the window, himseemed he saw a new paradise opened, for that he found an inward and marvellous solacement in her sight. Meanwhile, Madam Francesca, who was sore afraid lest her son should espouse Laura, found means of speaking privily

with her brother the Lord Abbot Caimo, a man of authority and repute, and with others of her own kinsfolk, as well as with divers uncles and kinsmen of her son's, and acquainting them all with the young man's amours and with that which had passed between herself and Messer Ambrogio, besought them all, as well her own kinsfolk as those of her son, of counsel and aid, so Gian Battista might, with the least possible incommodity, be hindered from taking Laura to wife. Many things were said and a thousand means proposed, each telling his deeming, and ultimately they resolved that the best course was to send the young man for some time out of Milan and meanwhile to marry Laura. To this all agreed, albeit Madam Francesca, who was a tender and indulgent mother, was loath to assent thereto. She loved her only son very tenderly and herseemed she might not live without him, for that, an she abode two or three hours without seeing him, she felt her heart sink within her. Nevertheless, moved by the exhortations of her brother and other her friends and kinsfolk and convinced that this was the only effectual means of bringing her son altogether to withdraw from that his amorous emprise, she also consented; wherefore they all agreed that the abbot should invite Gian Battista, with other his kinsfolk and two guardians of his, to dine with him on the morrow and that, after dinner, they should exhort him to depart Milan and go for a while to the Court of Rome.

Accordingly, they all dined together in the abbot's house and after dinner, one of the guardians said to the youth, "Tell me, Gian Battista, how doth the usance of our city please thee?" The youth answering that it pleased him amain, "I mean not to tell thee," rejoined the other, "that it is not good; but, an thou madest but one essay of the Court of Rome, thou wouldst maybe have no mind to return

hither in haste." "I know nothing of Rome,"¹ replied the youth; "but meseemeth all the pleasures of the world are in this our native place." Then, passing from one speech to another anent this matter, "Harkye, nephew," said the abbot, "an thou have a mind to sojourn some months at Rome, I will engage to get my sister's consent and thou shalt be honourably provided with monies. I warrant thee, indeed, thou wilt there become another man; for that, an thou be presently well-bred, thou wilt there acquire the height of good breeding and wilt learn a thousand fashions and see the finest things in the world; nay, an thou go thither once, thou wilt not for all the gold in the world have missed going thither." Ultimately, Gian Battista declared himself content to go thither, so but he had his mother's good leave, and accordingly they all went together to visit Madam Francesca and prayed her consent to this journey. She feigned herself unwilling, but consented in the end to her son's going for five or six months whither it most liked him. The young man thereupon advised his Laura of all and prayed her be mindful of him and abide steadfast to his love, for that he would speedily return and do on such wise that her father should give her to him to wife. Then, being furnished with that which he needed, he departed Milan, with an honourable company, and betook himself to Rome.

As soon as he was gone, Madam Francesco sent to call Messer Ambrogio and would know from him at what point things stood in the matter of marrying his daughter. "Madam," replied he, "I have three matches in hand, all which are sortable in degree and please me well-nigh

¹ Lit. "I know not so many Romes" (*Io non so tante Rome*), the exact meaning of which phrase is not apparent.

equally ; but, since you, of your favour, deign to accommodate me with the money, I am determined to choose him to son-in-law who shall seem to you most to the purpose." He accordingly told her the names, surnames and conditions of all three and they agreed, after much talk, upon one of them ; whereupon Madam Francesca, according to promise, lent Messer Ambrogio the thousand ducats and so enabled him to conclude his daughter's marriage in two or three days' time. The nuptials were duly celebrated and a little while after, the husband, who abode in the Biglia quarter, carried his bride home to his house. Now, before Gian Battista departed, he wrote several times to Laura and passing before her house, did her obeisance, as I have already told you, as it were to take leave of her, as she stood at the window. Then, having left one of his serving-men, who was cognizant of his love, in charge diligently to spy out all that she did, he repaired to Rome and on his way thither, saw goodly cities and fair ladies. Moreover, at Rome he saw store of the latter, but none that seemed to him so fair as Laura.

His mother, when she saw Laura fast married, wrote forthright to her son to return and he awaited no second letter, but returned home post haste. As soon as he had alighted, he embraced his mother and withdrawing to his chamber, to change his riding-dress, asked the serving-man how it was with Laura. "Ill," replied the man ; "for she is married to such an one and the nuptials are accomplished." At this news Gian Battista was like to die of grief ; nevertheless, he took heart and mounting to horse, went in search of Laura, whom he found at the door with a kinsman of her husband's. He knew her incontinent, but marvelled amain to see her blinded of one eye. Then, going up to her, he saluted her and she bade

him welcome back. He gave her joy of her marriage and professing himself rejoiced at her happiness, said presently that he condoled with her over the mishap which had befallen her. "What mishap?" asked she. "The mishap of the eye," quoth he, "which I see you have lost." Whereupon the damsel, who was quick of wit, said to him, "And I give you joy with all my heart of having recovered both your eyes." Now Laura had still from a child had one eye marred; but, whether it was that the youth was overmuch blinded by love of her or that the lattice which was over the casement hindered him therefrom, he had never observed it. Thus, then, doth love blind unwary lovers.

Bandello

to the right magnificent and excellent in ebery branch
of learning, Signor Julius Cæsar Scaliger.

There use oftentimes to betide certain unlooked-for circumstances, against which the wisest man alive might unceath avail to provide, and yet bytimes a sudden chance will in a trice solve the whole difficulty. Now, if this, as is daily seen, happen in various cases, it appeareth withal to occur with most frequency in love-matters; wherefore, there being a very goodly company of Gascon gentlemen and fairest ladies come with Madam Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, my patroness, to the Château de Bassens, to enjoy its agreeable situation and the freshness of the air in the fashious season of the dog-days, and it being discoursed, at the time of the midday-rest, of untoward love-chances, Messer Girolamo Aieroldo, a Milanese gentleman and master of the horse to the most serene King of Navarre, seeing, after the matter had been variously debated, that well-nigh every one was silent, said, "I purpose to tell you an adventure which befell no great while agone in Gascony and whereby you will see that chance or fortune whiles applieth a remedy and provideth against a difficulty in cases where Solomon with all his wisdom had been lost. But, for apt considerations, I will suppress the true and proper names of the persons concerned and will avail myself of

feigned names." Accordingly, he, to the pleasure of the worshipful company, related his story in the French language, there being none of us Italians but understandeth that tongue, for the long sojourn we have made here. I that same day wrote down the story related by Aieroldo and resolved that it should be seen under your learned name, not, certes, that I am so fond as to account the thing worthy of your merit, of your learning and of your ancient and noble lineage, but to certify you, by this slight mark of respect, of the desire of my soul, which would fain avail to do you a far greater honour, knowing you to be deserving, for your innumerable gifts, of every great thing. Fare you well.

The Five-and-Twentieth Story.

THE VARIOUS ADVENTURES OF A LOVER WITH A MADMAN AND OTHERS.

There was once in these parts, not far from this place, a gentleman of France, whom we will for the nonce call Gian Cornelio Salvinco, and he, having settled in Gascony and being a man of high spirit and lofty understanding, contracted an intercourse with a very fair gentlewoman, the wife of a baron, who much delighted in hawking and who, amongst his other birds, had a goshawk, the best in all the country, with which he took great pleasure in fowling. He had a brother, who had fallen mad, on such sort that he most times harboured in the woods, but, according as the humour took him, he would come home whiles at midnight and needs must the mansion be opened to him at what hour

soever he would ; otherwise he fell into a parlous fury and wrought incredible mischief among the neighbouring houses, howling, shrieking and raging after such a fashion that he seemed a very devil of hell. It had been essayed to keep him locked up in a chamber, but he raged on such wise that he gnawed his own hands and would have fretted himself all away, had it not been opened to him ; wherefore he had liberty to go and come night and day, according as it most pleased him. By day in the sun and anights by the light of the moon, he battled with his own shadow, keeping the strangest coil in the world, and many a time he gave his shadow to drink and seeing that it drank not, but moved in accordance with his own motions, he cast the wine over it and after fell a-laughing immoderately and doing other like extravagances of his fashion, the which afforded great diversion unto whoso saw these his antics. By day, as he were not molested, he gave none annoy or hindrance, but by night he came to blows with all whom he encountered, laying about him at random and dealing and taking cudgel-strokes galore.

Now, Gian Cornelio, going often a-hunting with the baron, became a familiar of the house, where, by dint of long frequentation, he fell in love with the gentlewoman and had fortune so favourable to him that she also became enamoured of him ; and for that, when two are of one same mind, it seldom chanceth but the effect ensueth according to their wish, there passed no great while ere they took amorous pleasure one of other. This nowise quenched the flames of love in the desirful lovers, but rather added fuel thereto, so that they would fain have been together by night ; but this might not be, save when the baron went abroad, the which he did often enough, but the multitude of the folk who abode in the house

was of great hindrance to them. The lady had a trusty chamber-woman, whom she had already made cognizant of their loves and in whom she confided as in none other in the world, and this said chamber-woman slept with her, whenas the baron was not there. Things standing thus, Gian Cornelio, having pondered various ways of availing to be with his mistress and himseeming none might stand him in stead, bethought him that, a means once found of entering the house by night, the rest might lightly succeed to him, for that he would go thither at such hours as the household were abed, and of the dogs he needed not to be in fear, he having made them familiar with him through the chase. This his thought he imparted to the lady, whom it misliked not, and told her how he meant to procure himself garments of the same colour and fashion as those of the madman, so he might have the more liberty to go and come anights. Moreover, he found means to take an impression of the key of a certain door, which gave access to the house, but was not much used, and let make thereby a like key which availed him excellent well. He let also make himself in another hamlet garments like those of the madman, who was well-nigh his match in bigness and other bodily features. Now, as he went about by night, he fell in often enough with the madman, and whenassoever they encountered, needs must he fall to with him and wag his hands. The madman was lusty, but fought without art or skill and dealt his blows at random; whilst Gian Cornelio was mighty robust of his person, well-thewed and long practised in arms, and struck with the flat of his sword, studying as most he might to fend himself and parry the fool's blows; nevertheless, he gave him bytimes some wounds, for that blows cannot still be kept within

measure. The fool, being after asked with whom he had fought, replied, that he had fought with himself, himseeming it was he, for the likeness of the clothes, and said all manner extravagances, laughing without end, what while he told how he had put his shadow to flight.

In this disguise Gian Cornelio succeeded whiles in foregathering with his mistress and whiles not. Now it chanced that, what while he abode in this practice, one of the household, having the goshawk on his wrist, said, in the fool's presence, "By my faith, this bird is as fat as a dormouse and were good eating for whoso should set him a-roast." The fool, hearing this, said, laughing, "Cock's body, but I will eat him;" but made no movement [to do it for the nonce]. That night, at the wonted hour, Gian Cornelio entered the house and himseeming he heard some one in the kitchen, he stole thitherward, to see who was afoot at that hour. Coming softly to the kitchen door, he saw the fool in act to put a bird on the spit and abode on the watch till he was certified that he had killed the goshawk, for that its head lay at the door, and so he saw him fall to roasting it, he having put off his cassock and remaining in his doublet. I need not tell you how the gentleman marvelled; nay, seeing such an extravagance, there took him of a sudden a desire to laugh. Then, perceiving that there was none about the house save the fool, he repaired to the lady's chamber, where he put off his clothes and lying down with her in the bed, began amorously to divert himself with her, according to his wont. Now, the falconer, having an ailing falcon, to which it had behoved him give a purge aforenight, arose about midnight, to see how the bird fared and what it had voided, and coming to the kitchen, to light his candle, saw the fool in act to turn the spit; then, entering, he stumbled over the goshawk's head and taking it up, "Alack," quoth

he, "who hath killed the goshawk?" The fool, seeing the falconer enter the kitchen, misdoubted him he came to take the bird from him and starting up from his seat in a fury, ran, with the spit, goshawk and all, at the falconer, who, scizing a bar on which he chanced to lay his hand, began a great affray with the fool. The latter cried out in a loud voice, making the greatest clamour in the world, whilst the falconer roared no less lustily for aid.

The lady, hearing the noise of the blows and the outcry which was toward, aroused her lover, who, donning his hose and doublet in haste, remembered him not to take his cassock, which lay on a press at the bedfoot, but went forth, in his doublet, by a door, which gave upon a garden, and made his way into the highway; where, perceiving that he was cassockless, he halted to hear an he might apprehend the cause of the outcry. The lady then let open the chamber-door by her chamber-woman, just as the falconer, unable to stand against the fool, fled away from him and hearing the lady cry, "What is this?" entered the chamber, where there was still a light burning, followed by the madman, spit in hand. The latter, seeing his sister-in-law, had so much respect for her that he offered the falconer no farther hindrance, but declared that he had gone to roast the bird and that the other had offered to take it from him. Meantime the lady espied her lover's cassock and was sore dismayed; but the fool, seeing it and thinking it his own, took it, without saying aught, and left the room. The falconer, seeing the contention at an end and the fool gone into the saloon to eat the half-roasted goshawk, went off to see the sick falcon and found the fool's cassock; whereat he marvelled amain and said in himself, "How is this? Marry, I saw the fool's cassock on his shoulders, whenas he departed Madam's chamber, and now meseemeth I see it

here; but I will take it and have it dyed black." As he said, so he did, on such wise that none ever perceived it, save Gian Cornelio, who was certified that he had left his cassock in the lady's chamber and knowing it, by a certain mark in the lining, on the fool's back, laughed more than once over the chance, he and his mistress, with whom, what while he sojourned in Gascony, he gave himself a good time, whensoever they had commodity thereof.

Bandello

to Mademoiselle de Vaulz, Madam Anna della Figueria.¹

Madam Fregosa, Signora Costanza Rangona [that was,] was late at Montbrano, a castlewick of this diocese of Agen, [whither she came] to avoid the heats, which are at this season very intense in the city, and whither you yourself used often to resort for your pleasure and to keep her said ladyship company. There chanced one day to come letters to her ladyship from Grasse, a city in Provence, and she thereupon asked the messenger if there were aught new in those parts; to which he answered that there was no otherwhat than that a gentlewoman had let slay her husband and the murder discovered, had taken to flight. There was then present Monsignor Bartolommeo Grimaldo of Nice, Canon of Agen, who had that day dined with her ladyship and who related the story as it had happened, avouching himself to have heard the whole in detail from one of his brothers, who came from Nice to visit him, that town being very near unto Grasse. The case seemed to us all who were present very strange and you yourself, being in company with us, said to me that the story was in truth well worth to be added to the number of my novels and that I ought anywise to

¹ De la Viguière ?

commit it to writing; the which I promised to do and accordingly wrote it down even as it had been recounted. Then, bethinking me to whom I should dedicate it, I determined in myself that, since you had induced me to write it, it ought justly to be yours; wherefore I have entitled it in your name and give it to you, not indeed as anywise in requital of the many kindnesses I have, of your favour, received from your family, but to show forth at the least the gratefulness of my soul, which is ever mindful of you and still avoucheth itself your debtor. And who knoweth not that, Madam and we all being foreigners newly come from Italy, we have still been most lovingly seen and entreated of you, as if indeed we had been born of your blood? Certes, your courtesies towards us have been so many and so great that they need not to be recounted, being notorious unto all. Do you, then, take this my little gift with that magnanimity which rendereth you lovesome and acceptable unto all and [prompteth] you so freely and courteously to bestow your substance upon others, and may our Lord God prosper your every thought! Fare you well.

The Six-and-Twentieth Story.

THE DISHONEST AND ILL-OMENED AMOURS
OF MADAME DE CABRIO, A PROVENÇAL
LADY, WITH HER PROCTOR AND [HOW
THERE ENSUED THEREOF THE] DEATH
OF MANY FOLK.

I will relate to you, most excellent Madam, the case whereof the messenger hath bespoken you, as having occurred at Grasse, neither more nor less than as it was told me of my brother, who, for that Grasse is near unto Nice, useth very often to resort thither and hath much acquaintance there, nay, familiarly knoweth many of those who are concerned in the story. Grasse, as you have heard, is a city not over-great, but exceeding delightsome of situation, for that it is seated partly on the plain and partly on a pleasant and fruitful hill, wherein are very cool and limpid springs and most goodly and agreeable groves of oranges, citrons, lemons and all other sorts of fruits, [in all which it aboundeth] as much as any other [city] in Provence. Life there is very domestical¹ and [is still enlivened] with cheerful converse. Now in the county of Grasse is a castle-wick, some two miles distant from the city, called Cabrio,² to the lord whereof was married a gentlewoman of the

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¹ *i.e.* familiar and unceremonious (*domestico*).

² *Quare* Cabriols?

country, who was sister to my lord [Bishop] of Calliam¹ and Mas. She lived a long while with he husband and bore him many children, of whom I know two, one a canon of Grasse and sacristan² of the Cathedral Church there and another who presently abideth at Toulouse and occupieth himself with the study of civil and canon law.

Now, when somewhat advanced in years and whilst her husband yet lived, Madame de Cabrio from a good gosling as she was (having from her youth upward still borne the name of a chaste and modest matron) became a very goose, for that, whatsoever might have been the cause thereof, her husband began to be odious and fashious to her and being unsatisfied with his embraces, she determined to procure herself elsewhere one who should jumble her furbelows for her. There was in Grasse a doctor [of the law] and a townsman of the place, by name Messer Gian Tolonio, of whom she became passionately enamoured; and he resorted daily to Cabrio, for that he was advocate and proctor to the seignior and ordered all his affairs. With him she became so familiar that they often and again took amorous pleasure one of other; wherefore, the better to enjoy her doctor, she agreed with him to have her husband assassinated, herseeming it was not enough to have planted the horns on his head, an she did him not eke to death. Having come to this determination, they sought out one Giovan Tros, a man of very ill life, to whom they gave a certain sum of monies, and he, taking to himself a fellow of his own sort, imparted to him that which he purposed to

¹ *Quere* Cavaillon in Lower Provence, which was a bishoprick in Bandello's time?

² The sacristan of a Cathedral Church was anciently a very important official; he was always a priest, having the charge of the church treasures and the ordering of the services and festivals.

do ; wherefore, having agreed together and masked themselves, they one day most barbarously murdered the hapless seignior before the very gate of the castle of Cabrio, and matters passed on such wise that neither were the murderers known nor was any suspicion soever had of the lady or the doctor. The wicked woman feigned herself in public sore grieved for the death of her husband and together with the doctor made a great show of seeking after the murderers ; nay, the assassins themselves were the ministers who made the inquisition by commandment of the lady, as Seignioress of Cabrio.

Meanwhile, having a free field for her converse with her gallant, she applied to give herself a good time ; but, the pair carrying on their intercourse with less discretion than behoved, one of her sons became aware of his mother's unchaste life and chagrined beyond measure, one day lovingly rebuked her thereof. She strove with false arguments to do away her son's suspicions, telling him that Tolonio was a man of worth and a very fast and faithful friend of the family, that he had all their affairs in hand and that it was necessary she should converse with him at all hours of the occasions which momentarily befell, there being none who had such long cognizance as he of the law-suits and jurisdictions of their castlewick and other family matters, for that he had still governed the whole during the lifetime of his father of blessed memory ; and many other things she said to this purpose till herseemed the lad's suspicions were quieted. But this new Medea, fearing lest he should say aught to his brethren and others and noting that he was used to walk an hour or two every day in a certain gallery or balcony, imparted the whole to Tolonio and loosened a board of the gallery on such wise that the youth, going to walk according to his wont and having

made two or three turns, chanced to set foot on the unfastened board, whereupon he fell from top to bottom of the castle and striking upon certain great rocks, was dashed to pieces.¹ Great was the outcry in the castle and the unnatural mother, who rejoiced in her heart, made a show of being like to go mad for despair and filled the air with cries and lamentations, seeming as she would receive no consolation.

Having thus cruelly rid herself of her hapless son, she addressed herself to lead a merry life with her advocate, wearying, but never sating herself.² However, she taking more assurance than behoved, no great while elapsed ere another son became suspicious of his mother's overmuch familiarity with Tolonio; whereof the wicked woman becoming aware, she determined to do with this one as she had done with the other, nor waited for otherwhat than an opportunity of carrying her nefarious design into effect. Now she had by means of monies debauched a serving-man, with whom her said son was oftentimes used to go a-pleasuring, and the folk being one day a-hunting and running, as of wont, one hither and another thither, for that there were many in company, it chanced that the lad came to the top of a hill, which had a very steep peak or horn. Thinking to see that which his companions did below, he stationed himself on the summit to look upon the plain; whereupon the serving-man, who was with him, perceiving that he was seen of no one, gave him a push in the back, so that he fell headlong down and striking

¹ Bandello adds, "and broke his neck," an anticlimax of a kind not uncommon with our author.

² *Potius fessam quam concubitu satiatam*, Suetonius's words respecting Messalina.

his head and body upon very hard rocks, was all dashed in pieces and died ere he reached the bottom. The villainous serving-man, turning in another direction, followed after certain huntsmen ; nor was it long ere they began to hear the cries of their companions who had found the dead youth, all broken, whereupon they betook themselves thither and seeing the cause of the outcry, abode all aghast and full of compassion. The murderer feigned himself more grieved than the rest and with the aid of some of the others, carried the son's body to his mother, who did nor less nor more with this one than she had done with the first. Look you now what ills proceed from a disorderly appetite ! But the death of her husband and two sons sufficed not the wicked woman, for that she procured sundry others to be killed. There was in the house a page, who, whether he became aware of the lady's unchaste life or of the murder of her two sons or of sundry serving-men who had been slain by her contrivance, let fall certain words, which, being overheard by him who had cast the second son down from the hill-top, were by him reported to the lady and Tolonio ; whereupon, taking counsel together, they resolved that the page should eat no more bread and Tolonio undertook to carry their wicked will into effect. Nor did he lose time about the thing, but calling Giovan Tros, him, to wit, who had murdered the Seignior of Cabrio, the wicked woman's husband, charged him slay the page at his earliest commodity, the which was speedily accomplished ; for that the poor lad, being sent by the lady I know not whither and passing through a certain coppice, was there butchered by the assassin like a very lamb.

Madame de Cabrio much desired to have her gallant to husband and he also would fain have espoused her, knowing that, over and above her goodly dowry, she was full of

monies ;¹ but what stood in the way of their wishes was that Tolonio was married to the daughter of one Giovanni Turbaire, who abode at Jenas, a woman of worth and adorned with excellent fashions, by whom he had already had children ; nay, it is no great while since a son of his was at Bassens in your castle, most illustrious madam, having come thither in company of an Italian perfumer. Now, after many discoursements between them, Tolonio, determined to be even with his mistress in wickedness, agreed with her to rid himself of his good wife, but knew not on what wise to compass her death. He bethought himself more than once to cause Giovan Tros, his ordinary minister of such wickednesses, cut her throat, but knew not how to do, so the thing might be kept secret. He thought of poisoning her, but this way also was not to his liking, for that he feared to take the poison from the druggists and knew not himself to distil any sort thereof. Finally, blinded by his desire to marry the adulteress, he determined to be himself the murderer of his wife ; whereupon, one night, being abed with her, he most barbarously strangled her with his own hands and gave out that she had died of a sore spasm² which had befallen her, what while he was unable to succour her.

Giovanni Turbaire, the murdered woman's father, chanced to be that day in Grasse and seeing his daughter somewhat swollen in the face and her throat covered with livid blotches and full of finger-marks, suspected the thing as it was ; but he dissembled and discovering nothing to his son-in-law, adroitly questioned a woman of the household, who could say no otherwhat than that her mistress had been in

¹ Sic (*piena di danari*).

² *Fiero accidente*.

excellent case aforenight and had gone to bed cheerful and well disposed, adding, moreover, that she had heard a noise in the chamber and the lady cry out once or twice; whereupon the woeful father was certified that his daughter had been murdered by her perfidious husband. However, he made no stir about the matter, but no great while after he said to his son-in-law, "I leave thee to provide obsequies and mourning befitting thyself and my daughter, as I am assured thou wilt do. Meanwhile I will go do an occasion of mine and return speedily." Therewith he went in quest of the criminal judge and acquainted him with his suspicions, telling him of the serving-woman's story and the marks on the dead lady's throat; whereupon the judge let lay hands upon Tolonio and had the body examined by physicians, who declared the poor woman to have, without a doubt in the world, been done to death by violence.

Tolonio, finding himself in the hands of justice, either cared or knew not effectually to deny his misdeed; the which Madame de Cabrio understanding and knowing herself to be also guilty, not only of the death of the lady, as instigatrix of the crime, but stained with many other murders, whereof Tolonio was cognizant and participant, determined not to wait to be arrested by the ministers of justice and punished as a murderess; wherefore, taking a great sum of money, together with the household plate and other precious moveables, she retired to a castle of the Duke of Savoy's, called Poggetto, feigning to those of her household that it behoved her do this for certain specious reasons. She departed Cabrio betimes in the morning and reached Poggetto, which is not very far distant, at one flight. Tolonio was carried to Aix, a very ancient city, where there be hot springs and which was founded aforetime by [Caius] Sextius [Calvinus] the Roman, wherefore the

Latins call it *Aquæ Sextiæ*. There the Most Christian King holdeth a worshipful parliament for all Provence, whither appeals are carried from all the province, and from the final judgment of this parliament, as representing the king's person, there is no appeal. Tolonio being, then, in the hands of the parliament, his enormous process was formed¹ and in the course of his examination, he accused Madame de Cabrio of the adultery and of all the murders which he had committed. The senate, hearing the villain's confession and his voluntary ratification thereof, adjudged him to be taken back to Grasse and there, as he deserved, beheaded and quartered and exposed upon the gallows for food to the crows; the which was rigorously executed. The senators then let cite Madame de Cabrio by the officers of the parliament, assigning her a fitting term for her appearance, and seeing that she had fled and chose not to obey, they condemned her *in contumaciam*, (for that all law and reason cry out against the contumacious) to suffer death, whensoever she should come into the hands of justice, after the same fashion as her gallant. Then, she not appearing, they caused behead and quarter her in effigy, as is the custom of the realm, and so she is to be seen depicted in the market-place at Grasse.

She, being advertised of all this and feeling herself not fully secure at Poggetto, determined to depart thence and betake herself elsewhither; and accordingly taking with her one Giacomo Pagliero, for that all her serving-men and women had left her, she made for Genoa with her monies and gear. By the way, not to lie alone, she kept Giacomo with her, to such a pass was the wretched lady reduced,

¹ *Fu formato il suo enorme processo*, i.e. he was put upon his trial for his enormous crimes.

who bitterly bewept her misdeeds, repenting her, when too late for this world, of the many crimes she had committed. She arrived in due course at Genoa, where she abode some days with Pagliero; but whether it was that she, being somewhat advanced in years, satisfied him not, he being a young man, or that he was moved, as is credible, by greed of the lady's money and gear, he, one day, when she was abroad, took all she had and made off, nor is it yet known whither he went. The wretched lady, coming home and perceiving that all had been stolen, bitterly bewept her mishaps and knew not whither to turn for comfort or succour. Then, being left destitute of all worldly substance, save what she had on her back, and having no other means of procuring a livelihood, she hired herself to servant with a gentlewoman in Genoa and is yet there, so that she, who was nobly born and delicately reared and bred and used to command and be served, now obeyeth and serveth others. To this wretched way of life hath she brought herself by seeking to satisfy all her dishonest appetites and certes it would behove us to have compassion on her, had she not, like a Medea or a Progne, wreaked such barbarous cruelty upon her husband and sons and upon so many others.

Bandello

to the illustrious Lord Count Lodobico Rangone.

It is accounted of all wise men of the world far worthier to do good unto others and to repair another's losses than to receive benefits and be succoured in one's own needs. And as it is a much harder and rarer thing to open our hands and give away our own good than to take that which is given us, those who give are still far fewer than those who receive; whence it may be said that true liberality consisteth more in well giving than in receiving; which said liberality is founded upon indifference towards riches or upon the pleasure which is taken in giving or the possession of the things wherewith benefit may be done to others and by means whereof the nature of the liberal is most manifested, and is a virtue in truth always laudable, having place between prodigality and avarice. Nay, even should it overpass the mean and run into one of the extremes, I am firmly persuaded that it is a far lesser ill to fall into prodigality than into avarice, for that the prodigal, giving out of measure and where he ought not, will most times, whenas he seeth his substance dwindle, open his eyes and return without difficulty to the mean, becoming liberal; whereas the miser, the older he groweth, the more doth avarice increase in him and he will never return to the mean. Liberality, then, was ever a laudable thing, especially when it is found in persons who are unused to practise that virtue, nature giving most folk more of the miser than of

the liberal; and such for the most part are women, who, being commonly unapt unto great gains, fear to fail of the means of living at their ease as they would fain do and therefore covet more and are less liberal [than men]. Nevertheless there be some women found who have a generous and magnificent heart and far excel men [in liberality]; and how greatly these deserve to be commended and exalted to the top of all praise, is best known of those who know of what praise and glory virtue is deserving. Now, if our age can boast any lady who hath by her proper worth merited the title of liberal, methinketh your honoured mother, Signora Bianca Bentivoglia of happy memory, was one and belike the chiefest; for that she, what while she lived, applied to give lavishly and to do fair courtesies to every one; nay, amongst other things, who knoweth not that your house was the very hostelry of whoso passed through Modena, were he of Italy or from beyond the mountains? But how can I overpass in silence the generous and liberal welcome accorded by her to the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, after Leo X., whenas he had escaped from prison, having been taken at the memorable rout of Ravenna,¹ and was on his way back to Rome? The cardinal arrived at Modena, unattended and without any commodity, and knowing your mother's courtesy and hospitality, came straight to your house, where he was received with the benignest of welcomes; nay, your mother re-equipped him with everything, clothing him honourably as became a cardinal and giving him monies, horses and mules and a mighty rich and fine cupboard of silver plate. To those who reproved her for

¹ A battle gained, 11th April, 1512, by the French under the Duc de Nemours over the combined armies of Spain and Pope Julius II. and said to have been the bloodiest ever fought in Italy.

these her unbounded courtesies, telling her she remembered her not that she was burthened with children, having eight sons and two daughters, and that she ought to add for them to their patrimony and not throw it away so prodigally, she sagely replied that she would not on any account fail of being courteous and liberal, whereas she might, inasmuch as she trusted in God that one only of her courtesies should some day produce such fruit that it would repay all the others and that all she gave was a gain accomplished, since thus she daily provided new friends for her children; and so she still persevered from good to better. Whence it may be said that she was a prophetess, for that the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, when he was made pope, mindful of the benefits received, sent to fetch her and bring her worshipfully to Rome, where he assigned her a sortable pension, made one of her sons Cardinal of Holy Church with a great revenue, advanced Count Guido to high rank in his army and bestowed on Count Annibale a rich and noble wife and the captaincy of his body-guard, besides many other benefits and favours which he did your family; and Clement VII. (who had likewise been harboured and succoured in his need by your mother,) following in the footsteps of his predecessor, still applied to the advancement of the Rangone house. Now, it being discoursed, here in Bassens, in the presence of your sister, the Lady Costanza Fregosa, of the courtesies practised by your mother, there chanced to be in company Giovanni di Nello of Florence, who had long sojourned in the island of England and who narrated a story upon a like subject, which much diverted the hearers. Meseemed it deserved to be numbered with my other novels; wherefore, after I had written it down, I set your name thereto for shield, and so I send and give it to you. Fare you well.

The Seven-and-Twentieth Story.

FRANCESCO FRESCOBALDI SHOWETH HOSPITALITY TO A STRANGER AND THE LATTER BECOMING CONSTABLE OF ENGLAND, IS WELL RECOMPENSED THEREFOR.

There was at Florence, not many years since, a man named Francesco, of the ancient and noble family of the Frescobaldi and a very loyal and honourable merchant, who, according to the usance of the country, although very rich, trafficked in various parts and carried on a great business. He sojourned well-nigh always in England and had his residence in London, where he lived very splendidly and practised great hospitality, not looking so closely to it as do many merchants, who look to the least farthing, Ansaldo Grimaldi of Genoa to wit, who, I understand, keepeth count even of the least sheet of paper and of an end of twine for tying packets of letters. It chanced one day that, Francesco Frescobaldi being in Florence, a poor man presented himself before him and craved him charity for the love of God. Frescobaldo, seeing him so ill accoutred and noting signs of gentle breeding in his countenance, was moved to pity, more by token that he knew him to be English; and accordingly he asked him what countryman he was. He answered that he was English and Frescobaldo asking him divers particulars concerning England, as one who was thoroughly conversant therewith, the young man very aptly

satisfied him of the whole, saying, "I am called Thomas Cromwell¹ and am the son of a poor clothdresser.² I fled away from my father and coming to Italy with the French army, which was routed at Il Garigliano,³ abode with a foot-soldier, after whom I carried the pike." Frescobaldo carried him home to his house and there very hospitably entertained him some days for the love of the English nation, from whom he had received many kindnesses, clothing him and entreating him kindly; moreover, when he was minded to depart and return to his native country, he gave him sixteen gold ducats in Florentine money and a good hackney.

The young man, seeing himself so well furnished, returned Frescobaldo such best thanks as he might and betook himself home to England. Now he knew, according to the excellent usance of well-nigh all the Ultramontanes,⁴ to read and wrote very aptly after the English fashion. He was a youth of exceeding high spirit, quick-witted and prompt of resolution, knowing excellent well to accommodate himself to the wishes of others, and could, whenas himseemed to the purpose, dissemble his passions better than any man in the world. Moreover, he endured all bodily fatigue with patience, so that, having engaged for counsellor⁵ with the Cardinal of York,⁶ a prelate of very great

¹ Bandello, with his usual inaccuracy, styles his hero here and throughout the story *Tommaso Cremonello*; but the details of the story make it evident that the person intended is the celebrated minister of Henry VIII.

² Incorrect. Cromwell's father was a blacksmith.

³ Where the "Great Captain" (Gonsalvo de Cordova) destroyed the French army on the 27th December, 1503.

⁴ *i.e.* the non-Italians.

⁵ *Consigliere*. He was the cardinal's solicitor.

⁶ *i.e.* Wolsey. Bandello fantastically calls him *Cardinale Eboracense*, *i.e.* Cardinal (Archbishop) of Eboracum or York.

authority, he in a little while grew to great repute with him and was much employed by him in all his affairs. The cardinal was then in exceeding credit with the English king and governed the whole island, holding a court so great and so worshipful that it had sufficed a most puissant prince ; whence it befell that he oftentimes sent Cromwell to speak with the king of affairs of the utmost moment and the young man knew so well to ingratiate himself with the latter that he began to show him a good countenance, him-seeming he was a man apt to the manage of whatsoever most important business. Now the king, with the cardinal's connivance, had then late repudiated Catherine his wife, daughter of Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Spain, and mother's sister of the Emperor Charles of Austria, in the expectation that the pope would confirm the writ of repudiation and dissolve the marriage, for the reasons assigned by him ; but the pope, accounting the repudiation unlawful, would not confirm it ; wherefore the cardinal fell into disgrace with the king and was dismissed the court.

After his departure from court, the cardinal reduced his household, keeping but a small number of folk about him, and daily rid him of one servant or another ; wherefore the king, remembering him of Cromwell, who had aforetime given him such satisfaction, let summon him and said to him, "Cromwell, as thou seest, the cardinal hath retired [from office] and hath no longer need for so many servants as when he managed the affairs of my kingdom ; and thou art presently out of employ, having nothing to treat for him. Hast thou a mind to serve me ?" "Sire," replied the other, "I have still served the cardinal very faithfully and will do the like with yourself, an you deign to avail yourself of me." "It is well," rejoined the king ; "even so would I have thee do, for that such is the expectation I

have of thy dealings.” With this he made him his principal secretary, employing him in whatsoever occasions of importance betided him ; wherein he bore him so well that the king gave him his privy seal in keeping and there were few in the kingdom had such influence with him as Cromwell, who to his mind was worth all those at court. Moreover, it seeming to that blind trull Fortune that she had not done enough in raising Cromwell from the earth and uplifting him to such a height, she must needs exalt him yet higher ; wherefore she caused the king create him Constable of the realm, an office of supreme dignity, with which none other may be evened, under the kingship.¹ Having made him Constable, the king gave all the governance of the realm into his hand and so Cromwell came to such a height that it was a thing incredible. Being grown to such a pitch of greatness, he showed himself a bitter enemy unto all the nobility of the island ; nay, whensoever he might avail to do some gentleman a mischief, he failed not thereof, and if the king took a spite against any of them, he still added fuel to the fire.

Meanwhile, the king determined (his wife, Catherine of Spain, being yet alive,) to take another wife at all risks and unable at any price to obtain the pope’s dispensation, he dispensed withal for himself ; whence there arose

¹ This is another inaccuracy. Cromwell was never Constable of England, for the simple reason that Henry VIII. himself abolished the office in question (that of Lord High Constable) in the early part of his reign, long before he took Cromwell into his service, and it has never since been granted to a subject. The highest dignity conferred upon Cromwell was that of Lord Chamberlain of England, which is probably that meant by Bandello or his informant ; he appears to have been misled by the fact that, among the many minor offices held by Cromwell, was that of Constable of Carisbrook Castle, granted him a year before.

infinite disorders in the kingdom of England and it became altogether severed from the Holy Catholic Mother Church of Rome, on such wise that innumerable monks and friars, refusing to consent to that his pleasure, were beheaded and many gentlemen and barons put to death. Many prelates and others of very godly life were also beheaded and matters came to such a pitch that few days passed but some one's head was smitten off and the nobility of England became well-nigh extinguished, the nobles being much more rigorously persecuted than men of low degree. Of all these ills Cromwell was generally believed to be the instigator, inasmuch as he hated the nobility beyond measure and sought to have it altogether extinguished, knowing himself begotten of very mean blood. But I purpose not for the nonce to recount to you the heinous and unrighteous cruelties and butcheries which were at that time done in England; nay, I began this story, to relate to you that which betided Frescobaldo of the hospitality shown by him to Cromwell.

You must know, then, that, in the days when Cromwell was master and governor of the island, Francesco Frescobaldi chanced to be in Italy, where, having, as often happeneth to merchants, suffered many disasters and great losses of his merchandise, he became very poor; for that, being a loyal and worthy man, he paid all to whom he was indebted and could not recover that which was owed him of others. Finding himself reduced to such poor estate, he cast up his accounts and found that he had more than fifteen thousand ducats owing him in England; wherefore he determined to betake himself thither and apply to recover the most that should be possible, purposing to pass the rest of his life in quiet. Accordingly he passed over from Italy into France and from France into

England and took up his abode in London, remembering him not withal of the kindness which he had erst done Cromwell in Florence; a thing in sooth worthy of a truly liberal man, who keepeth no account of the courtesies he doth others, but graveth in marble those which he receiveth, so he may repay them whenassoever the occasion offereth itself to him. He busied himself, therefore, in London with the transaction of his affairs and as he went one day through a certain street, it befell that the constable himself passed through the same street from an opposite direction. No sooner did he set eyes upon Frescobaldo's face than he remembered him to be certainly he of whom he had received such courtesy in Florence; wherefore, being a-horseback, he dismounted and to the exceeding wonderment of those who were with him, (for that there were more than an hundred mounted men in his train of the chiefest of the kingdom,) he embraced him very lovingly and said to him, well-nigh weeping, "Are you not Francesco Frescobaldi of Florence?" "Ay am I, my lord," replied the other, "and your humble servant." "My servant!" cried the constable. "That are you not nor will I have you for such, but for my dear friend. Nay, I must tell you that I have just reason to complain sore of you, for that you, knowing who I am and where I was, should have let me know your coming hither, so I might have paid some part of the debt in which I confess myself beholden to you. Now God be thanked that I am yet in time! You are very welcome. I go presently upon the king my master's affairs and can make no longer stay with you; wherefore do you hold me excused, but look you come dine with me this morning and that without fail." And therewithal he remounted to horse and repaired to the king at court.

Frescobaldo, the constable gone, remembered him that this was the young Englishman whom he had aforetime harboured in his house at Florence and began to be of good hope, bethinking him that the interest of so great a man would much avail him in the recoverance of his monies. Accordingly, at dinner-time, he betook himself to the constable's palace and waited but a little while in the courtyard ere he returned. As soon as he was dismounted, he embraced Frescobaldo anew on friendly wise and turning to the [Lord High] Admiral and other princes and gentlemen who were come to dine with him, "Sirs," said he, "marvel not at the love which I show this Florentine gentleman, for that this is in payment of infinite obligations in which I acknowledge myself beholden to him, it being by his means that I am in my present rank ; and you shall hear how." Then, in presence of all, still holding the Florentine by the hand, he told them how he had arrived at Florence and the kindnesses he had received from Frescobaldo ; and so they mounted the stairs and entering the saloon, sat down to table. The constable would have Frescobaldo sit beside himself and still entreated him most lovingly.

When they had dined and the guests had departed, he desired to know the occasion of Frescobaldo's return to London ; whereupon the latter related to him the whole story of his mischances and how, there being left him, beyond his house in Florence and an estate in the country, well-nigh nothing save those fifteen thousand ducats which were owed him in England, (and belike some two thousand in Spain,) he had betaken himself to that island to recover them. "It is well," said the constable. "As for things past, they may not anywise be undone ; I can indeed condole with you of your misfortunes, as I do with all my heart. For the rest I will take such order that you shall

recover all the monies which are owing to you here, nor shall you lack aught of that which is in my power, for I assure you that the courtesy you showed me, whenas you had no knowledge of me, rendereth me so much beholden to you that I shall still be yours and you may dispose of me and mine as if you were myself. The which an you do not, the loss will be your own, nor do I make you any farther proffer, meseeming it were superfluous. Suffice it that this be said to you once for all. But now let us arise and go to my chamber." [Accordingly they went thither], where the constable, shutting the door, opened a great coffer full of ducats and taking sixteen thereof, gave them to Frescobaldo, saying, "Here, my friend, are the sixteen ducats you gave me on my departure from Florence and here other ten which the hackney cost you, which you bought for me, and yet other ten, which you spent in clothing me. But since you are a merchant and meseemeth fair and right that your monies should not have lain so long dead, but should have profited, according to your usance, here be four bags, in each of which are four thousand ducats. Do you take them in return for yours and enjoy them for the love of me."

Frescobaldo, albeit he had fallen from great wealth to great poverty, had withal not lost his generosity of mind and would not accept the sixteen thousand ducats, thanking the constable none the less for that his great courtesy; but in the end, constrained by Cromwell, he must perforce take them and the constable would eke have him give him a note of the names of all his debtors; to which he very willingly consented and set down the same in writing, together with the sums which they owed him. Cromwell thereupon called a man of his household and said to him, "Look who these be that are set down in this schedule and see thou find them all out, be they where they may in this island, and give

them to understand that, except they pay their whole debt within fifteen days' time, I will put my hand to the matter, and that to their hurt and displeasance ; wherefore let them consider that I am their creditor." The man did his master's commandment very diligently, so that by the appointed term there were some fifteen thousand ducats recovered ; nay, had Frescobaldo required the interest which had run in so long a time, he had had it to the uttermost farthing ; but he contented himself with the capital and would have no interest whatever ; the which gained him exceeding good repute and favour with all, especially as it was already known of the whole island what interest he had with the constable. Meanwhile he was the constant guest of the latter, who daily studied to honour him as most he might and for that he would fain have had him constantly abide in London, his converse much pleasing him, he proffered him the loan of threescore thousand ducats for four years, so he might set up a house and bank in London and trade withal ; nor did he require aught of profit or usance therefor and he promised him, to boot, every possible favour in matters of merchandry. But Frescobaldo, being desirous of returning home and passing the rest of his life in ease and quiet, thanked him infinitely for such exceeding courtesy and remitting all his monies to Florence, returned, with the constable's good leave, to his native place, where, being now rich enough, he applied himself to live a very quiet life ; this, however, he enjoyed but a little while, inasmuch as he died that same year at Florence.

What shall we say, now, of Cromwell's gratitude and liberality ? Certes, as to that which he did with Frescobaldo, meseemeth it was worthy of the utmost commendation ; and had he loved the nobility of his country as he seemed to love foreigners, belike he had been yet alive ;

but he hated the English nobles overmuch and this in the end was the cause of his death. Nay, since there is no otherwhat to say, I will e'en tell you how he died. He abode some years in favour with the king and blinded by fair fortune, was mighty ready at letting cut off this and the other's head; nay, the nobler and greater they were, the fairer was he to show his power over them, whether they were churchmen or laymen. Now it befell that, thinking to have the Bishop of Winchester put to death (for what reason I know not) and being in the king's privy council, he bade the prelate in question render himself the king's prisoner at the Tower, a place where, according to that which is said of the people of the country, none ever entered but he was slain. The bishop, aghast at such a commandment, replied that he knew not what cause he had given to be thus entreated and that he would first speak with the king. "That can you not," replied the constable; "get you gone whither I tell you," and bade four of his men hale him off to prison. What while they were a-wrangling, the Duke of Suffolk, who was Cromwell's enemy, went to speak with the king in an adjoining chamber and told him of the contention between the constable and the bishop. The king, who knew nothing of the matter, sent one of his gentlemen of the chamber to call the bishop; which the constable, hearing, was sore despited and going home, abode four days without showing himself at court or at the council-table. The bishop accordingly presented himself before the king and declared that he knew not in what he had offended, but that he was in the king's hand, who should let do justice upon him, if he had made default. The king, seeing that Cromwell appeared not at court and that nothing was found against the bishop, released him, saying, in the hearing of the whole court, "I will e'en see who best knoweth to

keep his choler, I who am king or Thomas Cromwell." Meanwhile, he being known to be angered, many complaints were presented to him against the constable and it was found that he had been guilty of many misdeeds, especially in matters of law and justice. At the end of the four days, the constable repaired to the privy council and the place of assembly being shut, the king sent a councillor to bid Cromwell's retinue go dine and after return, for that their lord dined that morning with the king. Accordingly, they all went away and the king sending for his archers, posted them before the door of the council-chamber. The council ended, the constable came out and was taken by the archers and told that he was the king's prisoner; then, being carried to the Tower, he was there kept in strict custody, whilst his trial was set afoot, and a few days thereafterward his head was, by the king's commandment, smitten off in the Castle Green. Now, had he known to put a spoke¹ in Fortune's wheel, that is to say, to live as a gentleman and not be so greedy of human blood, his end had belike been a better and a more honourable.

¹ Lit. "the nail" (*il chiodo*).

Bandello

to the illustrious and accomplished Scignior The
Lord Count Niccolo d'Arco.

We were, a year or two ago, in company at Pineruolo, sitting in a little meadow without the town, full of very fine and green grass, wherethrough in a channel ran a very cool and limpid stream and with its soft and pleasant murmur made a dulcet and delectable music. Thither, as we reasoned of many things, came the Lord Count Guido Rangone of goodly memory, then lieutenant-general in Italy for the Most Christian King, who was presently in act to go round about the city walls, attended by many gentlemen and captains and other officers, marking out here a sconce, here a platform and there a bastion or other fortification, according as the diversity of the site required it, for that Pineruolo is situated partly on a hill, partly on the slope of the mountains and partly on level ground. In attendance on him were divers engineers, with whom he debated the whole and would have each one's opinion ; then he put in execution that which seemed the best and most advantageous for the security of the fortress, so that in a very brief space of time he made the place exceeding strong. When we saw him, we all rose to our feet, to do him reverence, and he, being a most urbane and courteous gentleman, saluted us very graciously and went his way.

Now there was with him *Vespasiano da Esi*, a most zealous and gallant soldier, who, besides being doughty of his person, had many other good parts such as befitted a gentleman, being courteous and well-bred, a man of ripe judgment, adorned with goodly letters, and a great enemy of sloth, for that he was still occupied, either with matters military or reasoning in company of matters of pith and pregnancy, or else you found him with some book in hand. When he saw us, he turned to me and asked me if he might, without hindering our discoursements, be of our company ; whereupon we all answered him that he was welcome and that he was like sugar, which never yet marred meat. Accordingly he came and saluted us and being of us in turn saluted, sat down and asked us what had been the subject of our discourse ; whereto *Messer Gian Battista Rinucci*, who was in act to tell us the story of *Lodovico of Florence* and *Madam Beatrice*, wife of *Egano dei Galluzzi of Bologna*,¹ replied that he was in act to tell the said story and that, if he wished, he would begin it again from the beginning. "No, no," said *Vespasiano* ; "do you e'en follow on where you left off, for methinketh there be many here who have heard it told or read it and peradventure there may be those who know it not. To the first a repetition would belike be irksome and to the others it will suffice to hear it once." *Messer Gian Battista* was well-nigh at the end of his telling ; wherefore he speedily made an end thereof, and some of the listeners fell to saying that themseemed it was ill done of a gentleman, such as *Lodovico*, to engage for servant with another, his peer and maybe his inferior. Others said that it was no great matter, if it be considered how great is the puissance of love,

¹ See my "Decameron of Boccaccio," Vol. II. pp. 343-50.

whenas it striketh root in a noble and generous heart ; and upon this there were many things said, according to the various opinions of those who discoursed of the matter. The debate being protracted, Vespasiano related to us a pleasant story to the purpose, the which much pleased me ; wherefore, as soon as I returned to my lodging, I wrote it down and laid it by in a coffer with mine other novels. Now, having let fetch from Italy sundry chests of my goods, together with such of my compositions, both in the Latin and the vulgar tongue, as were left me, when the Spaniards plundered my lodging at Milan and everything went to rack and ruin, but these were saved by a friend of mine, I set about revising those novels which I found there and Vespasiano's said story coming to my hand, I bethought myself to entitle it in your name ; the which I then and there put into execution, setting your name upon the forefront thereof, after my wonted fashion of dealing with all the others. Moreover, by letters received from the Lady Auriga Gambarà, sometime wife of the illustrious Signor Pietro Fregoso of Novi, I find you marvel that I have not sent you one of my books, containing stanzas composed in praise of the illustrious princess the Lady Lucrezia Gonzaga of Gazuolo,¹ and this is indeed a thing that hath caused me more wonderment and chagrin than it can have done yourself ; for that I, my lord, some two years ago, despatched into Italy, by the hand of the said Lady Auriga's secretary, thirty copies of the said book, amongst which was one for you, inscribed with your name at the beginning ; but as, by that which I see, it hath gone to Persia,² like

¹ See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 248, note.

² *i.e.* disappeared. *Ito in Persia*, a play upon the word *Persia*, quasi *perdita*, loss, as if formed from the preterite (*persi*) of the verb *perdere*, to lose.

sundry others, my cousin Messer Giacomo Francesco Bandello, to whom I addressed divers copies at Mantua, having written me that he had received only some thereof and those half spoiled, I will send you one by the first commodity that betideth me. Al gates, I thank you infinitely for the remembrance which you preserve of me, for that, to speak frankly, I could have sworn you had altogether forgotten me, it being well-nigh a generation since you saw me; nevertheless I have still had you in mind and whensoever it hath fallen to me to speak of the loftiest wits of our time in Italy, I have still numbered you among the first; nay, in corroboration of what I said, I have shown many the Elegy, emended in sundry places by your own hand, which you, whilst yet a boy, composed at Padua upon the consecration of your down¹ to Venus.² I have also shown the *Sylva*,³ which you sang (or rather wept) for the death of our most accomplished Messer Marcantonio Torre, together with the epitaph [composed by you upon the same occasion;] not to speak of other pastorals, hendecasyllabics, iambs and epigrams, which I have by me, with that of the R. Quinziano.⁴ These things approve the purity and loftiness of your understanding and accordingly, moved by my testimony, Signor Julius Cæsar Scaliger hath given you an honourable place among his heroes, as at my instance he

¹ *i.e.* the first hair on the face.

² A pagan custom, revived with many others in the fantastic enthusiasm for Greek and Roman fashions which followed the revival of letters.

³ Latin Pastoral Poem. Milton's *Lycidas* is a *Sylva* in English.

⁴ *Sic.* D'Arco's collection of Latin Verse (1546), in which we may suppose this poem (?) to have been included, is either not extant or so rare as to be unknown to most bibliographers. It is therefore impossible to ascertain what Bandello meant by "quello del R. Quinziano."

hath done with others and (in the heroines) with certain most lovesome ladies.¹ His book I will send you together with mine. But it is now time that we hearken to Vespasiano. Do you therefore accept this my novel with that same generosity of heart which, when we were at Pavia, showed your noble breeding, and hold me still of the number of your friends; wherewith I commend me to you and pray God vouchsafe you whatsoever you desire. Fare you well.

The Eight-and-Twentieth Story.

NICUOLA, BEING ENAMoured OF LATTANZIO,
GOETH TO SERVE HIM, CLAD AS A PAGE,
AND AFTER MANY ADVENTURES, MAR-
RIETH HIM; WITH THAT WHICH BEFELL
A BROTHER OF HERS.

I cannot deny that which Lodovico did, in that, being noble and rich, he went to serve another, to have been an act worthy of wonderment; but when we hear that he was in love, wonderment straightway ceaseth, for that same passion of love is exceeding great of puissance and causeth us do things far more wonderful and extravagant than this. Nor must you think that the ancient Greeks feigned the Gods, when in love, to have done so many blameworthy follies as are read of them, with other intent than to give us to understand that, when a man subjecteth himself to love and suffereth the amorous poison penetrate to his heart

¹ Probably in his great work upon Latin Literature, *De Causis Linguae Latinae*, 1540.

and there take root, he may be said to have staked and lost his liberty and it is no miracle if he after commit a thousand errors. Now, if it seem to you that what Lodovico did was a great matter, he who was a man nor feared that any should reprove him for his actions, were they good or ill, how will you deem if you hear that a girl did the like and went, clad as a page, to serve her lover, and that without being known? Marry, I am fain to believe that her act will seem to you more marvellous than that of Lodovico.

Now, not to hold you longer in suspense, methinketh there is well-nigh none of us in this delectable and honourable company but must well remember him how shamefully the Germans and Spaniards sacked Rome in the year of our salvation 1527; and albeit the sins of that city deserved a sharp chastisement, nevertheless those who sacked it, being Christians, did not well; indeed, I understand that they were for the most part Lutherans, Infidels and Jews. Be that as it may, they demeaned themselves far worse than Turks and did such enormous and shameful things against God and His saints as may not be recalled without grievous chagrin. Algates, vengeance from on high tarried not to overtake them, for that, of five to six-and-twenty thousand footmen, who committed so many wickednesses in that city, methinketh there were scarce two or three thousand to be found alive four years after; and the Duke of Bourbon himself (a prince of the blood royal of France, who had been made by Francis, first of the name king of that realm, the chiefest man of the state and turning rebel to his king, had entered the service of the Emperor Charles of Austria) was the first to suffer the penalty of the sin which he caused to be done; for that, being captain-general of the imperial army, he was miserably slain by an arquebusade, ere he might have the joy of seeing Rome taken. And albeit the

most part of the sackers and pillagers of things sacred and profane and violators of the Marial Virgins,¹ were, as hath been said, enemies of the faith of Christ, could not their governors have bethought them that many an one hath come to an ill end through violated religion and forbidden such sacrileges, incests, rapes, murders and other crimes? Is it not known that Pompey the Great, a most excellent man, after he violated the holy Temple of God in Jerusalem, still went failing from his wonted greatness nor ever again did any emprise worthy to be evened with the many which he had achieved theretofore and whereby he had earned so many triumphs? But whither do I suffer myself to be carried away? You are not here nor did I come hither to bewep the ruins of Rome.

Accordingly, I having promised you a story, you must know that in Rome, whenas it was taken by the Imperialists and everything was put to the sack, there was a Marchegan² made prisoner, a native of Jesi and a countryman of mine own,³ Ambrogio Nanni by name, a man of fair wealth and a most loyal merchant, whose wife, dying, had left him two children, a son and a daughter, both born in Rome. They were both fair beyond belief and so like the one to the other that, when clad alike either as boys or as girls, it was mighty difficult to know them; wherefore their father himself, who bytimes for diversion let dress them now on one wise and now on another, could not distinguish them, and having been born at one birth, they were of equal growth. Ambrogio let teach them letters and to play and sing and bred them as well as their age comported, they

¹ *i.e.* of the nuns under the special invocation of the Virgin?

² *i.e.* a native of the Marches of Ancona.

³ *Jesi* is the modern form of *Lesi*, a town near Ancona.

being then fifteen years old or a little more. The boy, who was called Paolo, was made prisoner by a German, a man doughty of his person and high in esteem among his countrymen, who, having made other prisoners of great value and gotten much monies by their ransom, beside much other booty he had made of gold and plate and rich raiment and precious stones of great value, departed Rome and betook himself to Naples, whither he carried Paolo with him and entreated him as a son. There he busied himself with selling the raiment and the greater part of the plate he had gotten and turning the whole into money, left the keys of all to Paolo. The girl, whose name was Nicuola, fell into the hands of two Spanish footmen and telling them she was the daughter of a rich man, was fortunate enough to be honourably entertained of them, the two fellows hoping to make great profit by her.

Ambrogio, by the favour of certain Neapolitans his friends, who served in the Spanish regiments, escaped being made prisoner and found means to save his monies and plate, which he had buried in a stable of his; but the rest that was in his house was all plundered. Thereafter, enquiring after his children, he found Nicuola, whom he ransomed with five hundred gold ducats; but of Paolo, how much diligence soever he used, he could never learn anything; wherefore he abode sore disconsolate, the loss of his son grieving him incomparably more than that of all the rest, great as was the value thereof. After he had done all he knew and might to find his son, but could get no news of him nor came there any message from him from any quarter, he sore misdoubted him the lad had been slain and caring not to abide longer in Rome, returned, woeful beyond measure, to Jesi, where, having put his house in order and being well to do for lands and monies, he chose no longer to busy himself with

merchandry, but applied to settle his accounts with every one, as best he might. Now there was in our city a rich burghess called Gerardo Lanzetti, a great friend of Ambrogio's, who, being a widower and seeing Nicuola's charms, fell so ardently in love with her that, without regard to the fact that she was very young and he nearer threescore than fifty, he presently demanded her of her father to wife, agreeing to take her without dowry. Look you now, sirs, what that traitor Love doth, when he entereth the hearts of such doting old men. He so blindeth their eyes and dazzleth them on such wise that, as we daily see, they fall into the most extravagant errors in the world and in effect well-nigh all old men who take girls to wife are sooner or later invested with the freedom of Cuckoldshaven.¹ Ambrogio, albeit himseemed ill to give Nicuola to an old man, said neither ay nor nay, for that he was yet in hopes of finding Paolo and would fain have forborne to marry his daughter till he should have news of him. Meanwhile great was the report of Nicuola's beauty in Jesi and it was indeed talked of no otherwhat; nay, whenassoever she went forth, she was pointed at of all with the finger and many passed before the house to look upon her.

Now it chanced that Lattanzio Puccini, a youth without father and mother, who was very rich in the goods of fortune and had not yet overpast his one-and-twentieth year, saw Nicuola and she him, whereupon each fell straightway in love with other and he attended to no otherwhat than to see her daily and show her with his eyes how he pined for love of her. She still showed him a very good countenance, which the youth perceiving, doubted not but he was beloved

¹ *Corneto*, i.e. are cuckolded; see *ante*, *passim*.

of her in turn and held himself the happiest lover that was aye. Nicuola, on her part, Lattanzio's good looks and manners pleasing her more than those of any she had ever seen, received the amorous flames on such wise into her soft and delicate bosom that, without his sight, she knew not how to live, and forasmuch as it rarely chanceth that, whenas two lovers are of one mind, there ensueth not that which they desire, Lattanzio found means to write to her and to have a reply from her ; but scarce had they agreed upon a means of conversing together when it befell that Ambrogio was constrained to return to Rome upon certain business and to abide many days abroad ; wherefore, choosing not that Nicuola should remain without fitting company, he sent her to Fabriano to the house of a brother-in-law of his, who had a wife and daughters, and that so suddenly that she could not make shift to advise her lover of her departure. Ambrogio himself went off to Rome ; whereupon Lattanzio, hearing he was gone away, doubted not but he had carried his daughter with him and used all diligence to find out the truth of the matter, but, learning nothing certain, was in despair and abode sore chagrined. Algates, being a high-spirited and hot-blooded youth, it was no great while ere he set eyes on another damsel, to wit, the daughter of Gerardo Lanzetti, a very fair and agreeable girl, with whose sight he did away the memory of his mistress and altogether forgot her.

Meanwhile, the disconsolate Nicuola abode in great affliction, seeing she had left Jesi on such wise that she had been unable to bid her lover farewell either by letters or messages, and did no otherwhat than bemoan herself, Lattanzio being still in her mind. She thought of him day and night and every hour seemed to her a thousand years until her father should come and carry her back to Jesi,

so she might see him whom she loved more than her very eyes. But, her uncle at Fabriano, in whose house she was, being an austere man and a stern, whom it liked not that marriageable girls should have liberty to speak with any one, except he were well known, nor that they should go trapesing hither and thither, and who would have had them rather attend to their woman's works, she could find no means of communicating with Lattanzio, for the damsels her cousins still kept her company and thinking her melancholy arose from her father's absence, comforted her as best they might. In this most bitter life the disconsolate Nicuola abode some seven months' time, for that so long did her father tarry ere he returned from Rome and passed through Fabriano, to take his daughter and carry her back to Jesi. She, thinking to come forth of hell and return into Paradise, went with him as blithely as you may imagine; but, when she came to Jesi, all her joy was turned to lamentation and to such sore jealousy that she came nigh to die of heartsgrief; for that she found her lover pledged to other than the Jews, and (what was worse) he seemed to remember him of herself no more than as he had never seen her. Now I would fain have those girls here who give such ready credence to the messages of young men of Lattanzio's kidney, who are like the potter's ass, that thrusteth his head into every door.¹ Marry, I would show them (pardon me, you young men who are here,) that of an hundred, ninety-and-nine abide deceived. To such a pass was it come with the enamoured Nicuola that she might e'en write and send messages to Lattanzio, recalling to his memory their past loves and that which had befallen between them; but all in vain; whereat she was beyond

¹ A simile borrowed from Boccaccio.

measure aggrieved ; yet, for that the worm of amorous wistfulness still gnawed at her heart and fretted it with the utmost affliction, she determined to do and say to such purpose that she should regain her lover's lost favour or else live no longer ; for that herseemed impossible to brook that he should love another than herself. What while she was in these tribulations, it behoved Ambrogio return to Rome ; but, Nicuola altogether refusing to go back to her uncle's house at Fabriano, she was placed by her father with a cousin of his, one Sister Camilla Bizza, in a nunnery, which was otherwhiles in repute for exceeding great sanctity. There, hearing that, instead of discourse of the lives of the fathers, of their abstinences and other virtuous dealings, it was wantonly prated all day long of things amorous and that the nuns thought no shame to say, one to other, "Such an one is my intendment,"¹ and "Such a man lay last night with such a woman," she abode both wondered and scandalized. Moreover, she saw that they, on their dainty skins, in lieu of hair-cloth, wore shifts of very fine linen from beyond the mountains² and very costly raiment, and not content with their natural charms, polished and embellished their faces with washes and compositions of a thousand distilled waters and musks and powders galore ; nor was there an hour of the day but they were in strait converse with divers young men of the city. At these things Nicuola marvelled sore, having thitherto believed all nuns to be saints ; and so becoming familiar now with one and now with another, she found them well-nigh all wanton and very lascivious. Mescemeth, indeed, a great folly in a father to bestow his daughter in such nunneries, which

¹ *i.e.* lover ; see *ante*, Vol. III. p. 361, note.

² *i.e.* from foreign countries.

should rather be called public brothels ; but the authorities of our city, in consequence of a scandal which befell no great while after in this particular nunnery, having with the Pope's licence ousted all who were there, have let reform the place, so that the nuns at this present live holily.

Lattanzio himself frequented the nunnery in question, letting oftentimes sew his shirts and other his linen there and Sister Camilla was accordingly one day called to speak with him ; the which Nicuola hearing, herseemed she felt a fire run through her veins that all inflamed her ; then, all at once, there spread an icy coldness over her whole body, and certes, whoso had taken note of her had seen her turn a thousand colours, so disordered was she at the mention of her lover's name. She presently betook herself to a place where, without being seen of Lattanzio, she saw him and heard that which he said ; whence it befell that (once amongst other times that Lattanzio came thither and she, from her wonted place of vantage, fed her eyes upon his sight and her ears with his talk,) she heard him complain sore of the loss of a Perugian page, who had lately died of fever in his house, saying that he had been served of him, during the three years he had abidden with him, as best could be conceived and declaring that he should account himself very fortunate if he found another like unto him. When he was gone, it occurred to Nicuola (see now how love had served her !) to clothe herself as a boy and enter her lover's service ; but, knowing not how to procure herself men's apparel, she abode sore perplexed. Now she had a foster-mother, whose milk she had sucked in her years of infancy ; and this her nurse was cognizant of her love and came daily to the monastery to see her, Ambrogio having, before his departure, prayed her visit her often and whiles, if Nicuola so willed it, carry her home with

her; the which was well known to the nuns. For her, then, she sent and coming to privy converse with her, discovered to her her intent. Pippa¹ (for such was the nurse's name) did her utmost endeavour to put that extravagance out of her head, showing her the peril and scandal which might lightly ensue thereof, but she might nowise avail to convince her; wherefore she carried her home to her house, where the girl found means to dress herself like a poor lad with the clothes of a son of Pippa's, who had died a little before; then, on the morrow, to make no delay about the matter, Nicuola, no more a girl but a boy, repaired to her lover's lodging and was fortunate enough to find him all alone at his door.

Romolo (for thus Nicuola chose to be called,) seeing him, plucked up courage and began to pass through the street, looking hither and thither, as do stranger lads on their arrival in a place never before seen. When Lattanzio saw him² go thus wandering, he judged him to be some lad who had never yet been in Jesi and who was peradventure in quest of a master; wherefore, coming forward from the doorway where he stood, he said to him, "Harkye, boy, art thou of this place?" "Sir," replied Romolo, "I am a Roman," and here he spoke the truth, inasmuch as he had been born and bred in Rome, "a poor lad, who, since the sack of the city, whereat I lost my father, (for that my mother died many years before,) go hitherto wandering meknoweth not whither, for that I set myself to serve certain folk and they would have me curry mules and horses, which I, being unused to such work, know

¹ Dim. of *Filippa*.

² Henceforward Bandello speaks of Nicuola in the masculine gender, so long as she personates a boy.

not to do. I did indeed serve a master in Rome to page and attended to his person and chamber; but the poor gentleman was wounded at the sack and being cast into the Tiber, was there drowned; and for that I bewept him, an infidel Spaniard gave me many buffets; so that, sir, I presently fare very ill." Quoth Lattanzio, "An thou have a mind to abide with me and serve me, as thou sayest thou didst thine old master, I will gladly entertain thee; and if thou please me, I will entreat thee on such wise that thou shalt still have reason to be content with me." "Sir," replied Romolo, "I will abide here nor do I ask otherwhat than to be requited of you according to my service." And so he entered the house with his master and addressed himself to serve him with such diligence, address and good breeding that he speedily effaced from his mind all regret for the Perugian. Lattanzio was marvellously content with him and flattered himself he had found the prettiest, the best-bred and the discreetest page that was aye. He clad him bravely and amongst other apparel he let make him, he clothed him from head to foot all in white; whilst Romolo accounted himself most happy, himseeming he was in Paradise.

Now, as you have already heard, Lattanzio was passionately enamoured of Catella, daughter of Gerardo Lanzetti, and passed every day before her house, showing her by signs and gestures that he was all afire for her. Catella, albeit she showed him a good countenance, nevertheless recked not overmuch of him neither opened her breast to the amorous flames. He had sent her letters and messages galore, but could never get any certain reply, whether good or ill, for that the girl refused to commit herself to anything particular. Her father was very rich in the goods of fortune, but avaricious beyond measure, and kept no household save

a decrepit old woman, born in the house before himself, a little maid and a lad, the son of one of his husbandmen, whom for the most part he carried with him, so that Catella had abundant leisure and commodity to stand at the casement and speak with whoso most liked her, for that the old crone abode without cease a-watch over the kitchen fire. As for the maid, she left the field free and favoured Lattanzio, having been debauched by him with sundry small presents; wherefore he might, whensoever it pleased him, ply Catella (whom in effect he loved beyond measure) with letters and messages, and himseeming Romolo was a very goodly speaker, he sent him to speak with his mistress, having first duly instructed him of that which he would have him do.

Romolo, who had many a time passed before Catella's house, knew where it was and was acquainted with her maid, having now and again seen his master speak with her; wherefore, having gotten this commission, he set out, all despited and disconsolate as can be told. But ere he went to visit Catella, he betook himself to Pippa's house and after some talk, bespoke her thus, saying, "Nurse mine, I find myself in the most desperate plight in the world, for that, having never dared discover myself to my lover and seeing him ardently enamoured of Catella Lanzetti, I live in such discontent of this my love that I cannot look for a happy issue thereof. And what is worst for me and most tormenteth me is that needs must I go presently bespeak her in Lattanzio's name and persuade her consent to love him, so he may require her of her father and take her to wife. Look you now, nurse, to what pass I am reduced and if Fortune could use me worse than she doth. If Catella be disposed to love him and consent to take him to husband, I shall not live an hour longer, nor can I see any shift for the

saving of my afflicted life, for it is impossible that I should see him another's than mine and live. Counsel me, then, dear my nurse, and lend me aid in this my urgent need. I had e'en hoped, seeing my service to be very acceptable to Lattanzio, one day to discover to him my case and persuade him to have pity on me ; but now all my hopes are scattered to the winds, inasmuch as I see him so passionately enamoured of this girl that he thinketh but of her day and night nor ever talketh of otherwhat. Woe is me, if my father should return and learn this that I have done, what would become of my life ? Certes, he would kill me ; help me for God's sake, dear my nurse ;" and so saying, she wept sore.

Pippa, who loved her more than her own child, began herself to weep, moved by her lamentation ; but presently, drying her eyes, she said to her, " Harkye, daughter, thou knowest what I have so many a time said to thee concerning this thy love, but thou hast never chosen to hearken to me. Certes, thou wert best remain here and I will carry thee back to the nunnery, against thy father return, and will order things on such wise that all shall be well. For, were it ever known that thou hadst served Lattanzio in man's apparel and slept so many nights in his chamber, what thinkest thou would be said of thine affair ? I warrant thee thou wouldst never find a husband. And for all thou swearest to me that none hath recognized thee for a woman, I believe thee not thereof ; nay, thou mayst say what thou wilt ; I will e'en believe that which meseemeth is reasonably credible. I know full well what these young masters use to do with their pages ; wherefore it would please me that thou shouldst put this maggot out of thy head and attend to otherwhat. Thy father cannot long tarry to return, and come when he will, I would not for all the gold in the world he should know aught of these extravagances ; else

woe to thee and to me? Since thou seest Lattanzio's mind set upon Catella and hast daily proof how infatuated he is with her, why weary thyself in vain? Why shouldst thou expose thy life and honour to such a risk, if thou art to have no fruit whatsoever thereof? All pains demand recompense; it is folly to labour in vain, especially whereas so much harm may ensue. And thou, what recompense expectest thou for such service? Thou expectest eternal infamy, not only for thyself, but for all thy family; nay, (what is of no small account) thou expectest to lose thy life thereby. Why love him who loveth thee not? Why ensue him who fleeth from thee? I for my part have never been so fond as to be fain to run after any one. Leave yonder man, daughter mine, and turn thy thought elsewhither, for that in this our city thou wilt not lack for young men, thine equals, who will love thee and account themselves favoured to have thee to wife. And who knoweth but yonder man, if he have e'en not known thee hitherto, may one day know thee and take of thee what pleasure he will and after concern himself no more with thee and do on such wise that thou wilt become a common woman and be pointed at with the finger for a shameless strumpet? Wherefore, daughter mine, take counsel and abide here with me."

Nicuola abode awhile in thought; then, heaving an ardent sigh, "Dear my nurse," quoth she, "I confess thou speakest very lovingly; but I have gone so far that I will e'en see the end thereof, come what will. I will go now to speak with Catella and see how she will take it; for hitherto Lattanzio hath gotten none but general replies from her; and for the rest God shall aid me, who knoweth my heart and knoweth that I strive for no otherwhat than to have Lattanzio to husband. I will come every day to speak with thee here, and if my father return, we will provide for our

affairs as best may be, for that meseemeth needless for the nonce to take thought unto evil ere it betide." Therewithal she took leave of Pippa and repairing to Lanzetti's house, arrived there even as Gerardo had gone to the market-place on certain of his occasions. Catella's maid was at the door and Romolo, giving her the signal which his master had taught him, was admitted into one of the ground-floor rooms whilst the girl went up and said to her mistress, "Madam, come down, for that Lattanzio hath sent his handsome page to speak with you, who you told me so pleased you." Catella straightway came down and entering the chamber where Romolo awaited her, no sooner saw him than she thought to behold an angel, so fair and graceful did he appear to her. He did his obeisance to her and began to tell her what he had in charge from his master, whilst she took an extreme pleasure in hearing him talk and ogled him amorously, dying of desire to kiss him and herseeming there issued an unwonted sweetness from his fair eyes.

Romolo addressed himself to bespeak her of Lattanzio's case; but she paid little heed to that which he said to her, being all intent upon his sight and saying in herself that she had never seen so handsome a youth. In fine, she viewed him so amorously and so deeply did the lad's beauty and grace penetrate into her heart that, unable to restrain herself longer, she threw her arms about his neck and kissing him five or six times ardently on the mouth, said to him, "Seemeth it well to thee to bring me such messages and expose thyself to the risk which thou runnest, an my father find thee here?" He, seeing her turn a thousand colours and plainly perceiving that she was enamoured of him, answered her, saying, "Mistress mine, needs must he who abideth with others and serveth do these and the like offices, according to the will and

commandment of his master, and I for my part do it very unwillingly; but he who can command me willing this, needs must I also will it. Wherefore I pray you vouchsafe me an acceptable answer and have compassion on my master, who loveth you so dear and is so much your servant, so on my return I may gladden him with good news."

On this wise they talked for a time together, what while it seemed to Catella that the page's beauty waxed ever goodlier and greater and bethinking her that needs must she part from him, she felt certain stings at her heart, which pierced her through and through; wherefore she determined to discover her passion to him and began on this wise to bespeak him, saying, "I know not what thou hast done to me; methinketh thou must have bewitched me." "Madam," replied he, "you mock me; I have done nothing to you and am neither wizard nor sorcerer; I am e'en your servant and pray you give me a fair answer, whereby you will keep my master on life and will cause him tender me dearer than he presently doth." Whereupon quoth Catella, who could hold out no longer and was like to melt for desire, as she kissed the page, "Harkye, my life and soul of my soul, I know no youth in the world who could have made me do that which I have presently done with thee; but thy beauty and the infinite love which I bear thee, since first I saw thee behind thy master, have moved me to this. I desire thee not to servant, but will e'en have thee (an it mislike thee not) be lord over me what while I live and dispose of me at thy pleasure. I ask not who thou art nor if thou be poor or rich nor of what blood thou art born. My father, Godamercy, is rich enough for thee and for me and so old that he can live little longer; wherefore do thou look to thyself and let

Lattanzio go, for that I, for my part, am never like to love him and shall henceforward leave showing him a good countenance." Romolo, after some farther talk, him-
 seeming the thing went as he would have it, promised Catella to do what she wished and returned her infinite thanks for her proffers, avouching himself eternally beholden to her, but declaring that it behoved to proceed cautiously, so Lattanzio should perceive nothing. Then, having agreed with her of that which was to be said to the latter, he, after many amorous kisses given and received, took his leave, going in sore fear lest Catella should put her hand to such a part of him as should give her to know that he was no male.

Returning home, he found his master awaiting him impatiently and began by excusing himself for his tardiness, saying that it had been a good while ere he might get speech of Catella and that, whenas he came to speak with her, he had found her in a great fume, as well because she had that same day been severely rated by her father for that her love was also because she had heard he was enamoured of another girl. "I did my utmost endeavour," said Romolo, "to oust this conceit from her head, adducing to her a thousand reasons, and argued long with her; but all proved in vain." Lattanzio at this news abode sore dismayed and chagrined and made Romolo repeat to him a good half score times all that had passed between himself and Catella. Moreover, he prayed him take an opportunity of returning to her and assuring her that he loved no other woman in the world than herself, that he was ready to give her all possible proofs thereof and that, do what she would, he was never like to love another, being resolved to be eternally her most loyal servitor; and Romolo accordingly promised to do all he knew and might to get speech of her.

On the morrow, Catella being at the window, Lattanzio passed through the street and as he drew near the house, the damsel with a disdainful gesture retired from the casement and withdrew indoors. This act added new assurance to the story told by Romolo to his master, who returned home, full of chagrin, and fell a-complaining to the page of his ill hap and sorry fortune; then, goaded by anger, he went on to say that Catella was not withal the fairest damsel in the world nor the noblest that she should bear herself so arrogantly and misprise him after such a fashion; and to this purpose he said many things. Hereupon Romolo began very adroitly to remind his master that these were things which were mostly used to happen, either for despite or through ill tongues or because of unconformity of humours, it being oftentimes seen that a man loveth a woman, who will never incline to love him, whilst another will love him, whom he can nowise bring himself to love. "Indeed, Romolo," quoth Lattanzio, "thou sayest sooth, for some months agone I was beloved of one of the fairest damsels of this city, who was newly come from Rome and who I know willed me all her weal;¹ nay, I also loved her very ardently; but she went I know not whither and abode many days absent; and in the meantime I chanced to set eyes on this proud baggage of a Catella;² whereupon, leaving the other's love and altogether casting her behind my back and into oblivion, I applied to serve this ingrate. The other damsel, on her return to the city, sent me letters and messages, but I took no heed of aught." "My lord," rejoined Romolo, "you are rightly served and have gotten the requital you

¹ *Mi voleva tutto il suo bene*, i.e. loved me with all her heart. For examples of this common idiom, see my "Decameron of Boccaccio" passim.

² Dialectic dim. of Caterina.

deserved ; for that, an you were beloved as you say of so fair a damsel, you did exceeding ill to leave her for this one, who, without knowing it, wreaketh vengeance for the other. We should love those that love us and not ensue those who flee from us. Who knoweth but this fair damsel yet loveth you and liveth in sore affliction for your sake ? More by token that I have many a time heard say that girls, in their first loves, love far more tenderly and with much greater fervour than do men. My heart forebodeth me this hapless lass must needs languish for you and live a life of anguish and misery." "That I know not," replied Lattanzio ; "I only know that she loved me passing dear and that she is very fair. Catella would seem to thee well-nigh foul in comparison with her ; nay, to tell thee more, it hath many a time occurred to my mind that, wert thou clad as a woman, I could swear thou wast herself, so much messemeth dost thou favour her in everything, and methinketh there is but little difference betwixt thee and her as to age, albeit messemeth indeed she is a thought taller than thou. But let us return to our talk of yonder trull of a Catella, whom I cannot avail to put out of my head ; nay, I think of her day and night and can turn my mind to no otherwhat. Tell me ; doth thy heart warrant thee to bespeak her and throughly to discover my love to her ?" "I will do what I may and know," replied Romolo, "nay, were I certain to receive death at her hands, I would return thither."

Now let us leave these awhile to their affairs and speak of Ambrogio's son Paolo, for that without him our story may not be finished. It chanced, then, that the German, Paolo's master, departing Naples, came to Acquapendente, meaning to go thence into Lombardy and after into Almaine ; but, when he would fain have quitted Acquapendente, he was taken with a sore colic and died thereof in three days, having

first made his will and left Paolo heir to all he had. Paolo let honourably bury his master and satisfied the host ; then, taking the right-hand road, he set out for Jesi, where he had aforetime abidden some months' space, having been sent thither by his father. When he arrived there, whatever might have been the reason, he went not home, but betook himself with his equipage to the inn, where, letting unload his baggage and giving it in charge to the host, he refreshed himself and leaving his servants, set out all alone to go about the city. Now he was, for a vow of his, clad all in white, after the same fashion as Romolo. He went first to see if his father's house was open and on his way, he passed before Catella's house and espied her at the window, but made her no sign, not knowing who she was ; whereat she marvelled sore, never doubting but he was Romolo, and straightway sent her maid after him to call him, it being presently about the hour of none and few people passing through the street. The maid accordingly calling to him for Romolo and saying, " Ho there, come hither, for madam calleth you," he perceived that he was mistaken for another and was the more certified of this that he saw the maid bespoke him as they had long been familiar together ; wherefore he resolved in himself to see who was this madam that sought him and thinking her to be a woman of pleasure, said in himself, " Let us go try our luck ; she cannot gain much by me, beyond a carlino¹ or a giulio² at most."

As he was making for the house, behold, Gerardo came to the head of the street, whom when the maid saw, " Romolo," quoth she, " see, yonder cometh master ; go thy ways now and return by and by." Accordingly he went off, noting

¹ A Neapolitan coin, worth about 5*d.*

² A Papal coin, worth about 6*d.*

the while the door at which the maid entered and what manner of man was the master of the house. The maid entered the house and shut the door, feigning not to see her master, who, coming slowly along, as old men do, had not observed her. Gerardo presently reached the door and knocked; whereupon it was opened to him and he entered the house.

Now Paolo had taken good note of the house and seen Catella at the window, who pleased him beyond measure, himseeming she was very fair and agreeable; wherefore there passed many thoughts through his mind. Then he made for his father's house and found it closed and the windows shut, which made him think that his father was not in the town. Algaes, the better to certify himself, he enquired of a certain tailor, who had his shop hard by, what was come of Ambrogio Nanni, and he answered him that it was many days since he had been seen in Jesi. Paolo accordingly returned to the hostelry, still revolving in his thought various things of the damsel he had seen and having a mind to return to visit her, he abode in doubt if he should go alone or carry with him certain serving-men whom he had of his dead master.

No great while after Ambrogio returned from Rome and on his way to his house, fell in with Gerardo, who bade him welcome back and added, "Ambrogio, thou comest in time, for that, hadst thou been in the city these past days, methinketh we should have concluded the match between thy daughter and myself or at the least I should have been certified if thou art willing to give her to me or not, for that I am determined to abide no longer in this doubt." "As thou seest," replied Ambrogio, "I am but now arrived and shall abide here many days, without going away again. We shall be together and will speak more at leisure of this

matter." As they were in discourse, Ambrogio ahorseback and Gerardo afoot, it befell that Romolo, on his way to speak with Catella, as his master had charged him, espied his father and turning in another direction, went off to Pippa and said to her, "Alack, minnie mine, I am dead ; for that my father is returned and I know not what to do." "Marry," quoth Pippa, "with God be it ; leave not the house and let me do ; but first put off these clothes and don thine own, which are in this chest." Thereupon Pippa went straight to Ambrogio's house and finding him in act to dismount, saluted him with a blithe visage, saying, "You are welcome, sir, a thousand times ; how do you ?" "O welcome, Pippa mine !" cried Ambrogio. "What goest thou about in this haste ?" "I come," replied she, "straight to you, for that Giannelloccio Bindi told me you were returned, so I may do what is needful, for meknoweth not how these your serving-men can cook." Quoth Ambrogio, "I thank thee ; but it needed not that thou shouldst take these pains, for that I have sent to fetch Margarita, who used to abide in the house, and she will be here out of hand. But tell me ; how long is it since thou sawest our Nicuola ?" "Sir," replied Pippa, "I see her every day and only this morning I abode a good while with her. Marry, she dieth of longing for your return and I have often carried her home with me and kept her two or three days. In truth, she is a good girl and a fair and worketh marvellously with her hands, more so, indeed, than I can tell you."

Meanwhile up came Margarita, who fell to doing various household matters, and Pippa wrought a good while with her, helping her ; then, herseeming every hour was a thousand years till she was quit of the house, "Sir," said she, "with your good leave I will go this evening to fetch

Nicuola from the nunnery and will carry her home with me, till you have gotten the house in order." "Do as seemeth best to thee," replied Ambrogio. "Commend me amain to Sister Camilla and kiss my daughter for me; and now go and good luck go with thee." Pippa accordingly departed and ere she went home, she repaired to the nunnery to visit and speak with Sister Camilla, with whom she ordered everything that was needful for the safeguarding of Nicuola, in case Ambrogio should go thither, and the sister, who was a past mistress in such crafts, bade her be of good courage, for that all should go well. She then returned whereas Nicuola, Romolo no more, awaited her with exceeding impatience, to hear how the thing had gone, having already donned her own clothes and tired her head as our girls use to do. Pippa acquainted her with that which she had done and told her that it was in her discretion if she would go home next day to her father or abide a day or two with her; whereupon Nicuola concluded to abide another day with her nurse and did nought but plague her with talk of Lattanzio, showing such a desire to have him to husband that greater might not be.

Pippa still exhorted her to turn her thoughts elsewhere, for that she saw plainly she wearied herself in vain, knowing Lattanzio to be so passionately enamoured of Catella that he thought of nothing else and would in the end have his intent, demanding her of Gerardo to wife. "It is that," rejoined Nicuola, "which tormenteth me, nor do I ever think thereof but I despair. But, had not my father returned so soon, I warrant me I would have brought Lattanzio so in disfavour with Catella that she had rather chosen a peasant to husband than him; but my father's unexpected coming hath marred all." "Marred?" cried Pippa. "Nay, it hath rather set all right. An that be true which thou

tellest me, anent that which passed between Catella and thee, methinketh thine affairs were at an ill pass, inasmuch as, hadst thou gone again to speak with her, she had doubtless been fain to pass from kisses to hand-play and finding thee a girl, how deemest thou she would have judged of thee? Hadst thou not abidden for ever shamed in her eyes? Would she not forthright have concluded thee to be Lattanzio's whore?" "That," replied Nicuola, "is the very thing which I would have had happen. Had she e'en discovered me, as thou sayest, to be a girl, she had not withal known me for Nicuola, daughter of Ambrogio, and Lattanzio had fallen into such ill savour with her that she would never again have brooked the sight of him or the mention of his name; so that I might have hoped to regain his love." Pippa could not forbear from laughing at Nicuola's reasonings and said to her, "Daughter mine, set thy heart at rest. An it be ordained of God that Catella is to be Lattanzio's wife, neither art nor address, no, nor any shift that thou canst devise, will avail thee to hinder such a marriage. Thou art yet very young, thou art fair, thou art rich, for there can be little doubt that, were Paolo thy brother alive, something had by this been heard of him; but the poor lad must certainly be dead, our Lord God have his soul! So that, an thou govern thyself sagely, thou wilt abide sole heir to thy father; wherefore thou wilt not lack for suitors of the noblest and richest young men of the Marches. Put away from thee, therefore, these extravagant fancies, which are more like to bring thee hurt and vexation than profit or advantage."

What while these things were in doing, Paolo bethought himself to go alone to see Catella and accordingly he passed before her house late that afternoon and failing to get sight of her, returned to the hostelry nor would go abroad again

for that day. Meanwhile, Lattanzio, to whom waiting was supremely irksome, seeing night darken, marvelled amain that Romolo returned not to render him an account of that which he had done with Catella. He awaited his coming an hour or two of the night, but, seeing that he came not, he abode sore chagrined and misdoubted him some ill chance had befallen the lad; however, he could conceive nought for certain and abode well-nigh all night without sleep, revolving various thoughts in his mind. He indeed loved Romolo greatly, for that he had been mighty well served of him and had found him a discreet and well-mannered lad, who had never made words with any in the house and had diligently applied to do whatsoever was bidden him; wherefore it grieved him sore to have lost him. On the other hand, Catella, who was passionately enamoured of Romolo, having tasted his dulcet kisses, was eager to come to closer quarters with him; but, seeing him no more that day after Gerardo's coming home (for that she had mistaken Paolo for him), she went to bed sore discontent. Nicuola talked all night with her nurse of Lattanzio, sighing and tossing from side to side, so that she neither slept herself nor suffered Pippa to sleep, and knowing that the latter had told her father she would keep her a day or two, she resolved to remain with her.

The day come and Romolo not returning, Lattanzio sent hither and thither in search of him and let diligently enquire on various wise if aught might be learned of him, giving the particulars of his raiment and his age, till he found one who professed to have seen him on the previous day enter the house of Pippa di Giacomaccio, who abode hard by the Cathedral Church. Lattanzio, who knew the latter, having this clue, went to visit her about dinner-time and knocked at the house-door; whereupon Pippa came to the window

and recognizing the young man, marvelled and misdoubted her he knew belike that Nicuola was in the house and said to him, "Young man, what seek you?" "Dame Pippa," replied he, "an it mislike you not, I would fain speak half a score words with you." "Five-and-twenty, an you will," rejoined she and telling Nicuola that Lattanzio was below, went straightway down and opened the door. The young man entered and seating himself beside Pippa, in a place where Nicuola might, without being seen herself, see him and hear what he said, bespoke her thus, saying, "Dame Pippa, albeit I have never done you any service which warranteth me in presuming to require you of a kindness, nevertheless, my usance, which is to compleas every one, and my knowledge of you as a woman beloved of many gentlemen (the which showeth you to be courteous and obliging,) emboldeneth me to have recourse to you, in the steadfast hope that you will fully satisfy my desire; wherefore, without more words or ceremonies, I pray you instantly vouchsafe to tell me what is come of a lad of maybe seventeen years old, by name Romolo, clad all in white and mighty well-favoured and sprightly of aspect, who came hither yesterday to visit you. He abode with me to page and hath not returned home since yesterday. I prithee be pleased of your favour to give me news of him, for you will do me a singular kindness and I shall be eternally beholden to you." "My son," replied Pippa, "I thank you for the goodly and courteous mind which you show me; marry, it is passing dear to me and I am well pleased that you should have deigned to visit this poor house, for I have this many a day desired to have an opportunity of talking with you; the which being presently afforded me by your courtesy, I would fain not lose it. But first, to answer your enquiry, I must tell you that I can render you no account of your

lad, for that neither yesterday nor these many days hath there been any boy or youth here that I know ; and I should certainly know it if any such person had been here." Quoth Lattanzio, "You fear belike I shall deal the page some chastisement for that he returned not home ; but I pledge you my solemn troth to give him no annoy, so but he tell me truly for what reason he came not back to me yesterday." "It booteth not to weary yourself anent that," rejoined Pippa ; "for that no man is in this house nor was here yesterday, and it grieveth me infinitely that I cannot serve you in this matter, gladly as I would do it."

Lattanzio sighed heavily, what while Pippa talked with him ; wherefore, "Young man," quoth she, "you seem sore distressed and no one who heard those ardent sighs but would judge you to be overmuch enamoured of yonder page of yours, albeit my having otherwhiles understood that you loved a fair damsel forbiddeth me to believe that you are such an enemy of the ladies." "Alack," cried Lattanzio, "would God I were not in love, for I should be blither and happier than I presently am ! Nor must you deem that I refer to my page, for I think not of him ; nay, I speak of a damsel whom I love more than mine eyes, yea, more than my very soul." With these words, the hot tears brimmed up his eyes in his own despite and some e'en bathed his cheeks, and still he sighed sore ; whereupon Pippa, herseeming she was given an opportunity of essaying that which it had already occurred to her to do, said to him, "I know right well, my son, that what you tell me must needs be true, an you love as you avouch ; more by token I am firmly convinced that there is no misery in the world sharper or more grievous than to love and be unloved. Moreover, I know that the damsel whom you love nowise loveth you, nay, she hateth you rather, for that she loveth another."

“How know you that, Dame Pippa?” asked Lattanzio, all full of wonderment. “Ask not,” replied she, “how I know it; suffice it that I know you presently love one who loveth you not, albeit it is not many months since you loved another damsel far fairer than this and I know that she loved you most ardently; nay, more, she loveth you yet more than ever, and you love her not and remember you of her no more than as she had never been seen of you.” “Verily,” rejoined Lattanzio, “I know not what to say, since you have hit so aptly on the truth and are e’en so well acquainted with my affairs. But prithee, of your favour, be pleased to tell me how you know that she whom I presently love loveth me not and loveth another.” “That,” answered Pippa, “I may not tell you, for that methinketh it were unbecoming; but meseemeth right to remind you that in this you are justly served, since you scorn her who loveth you and love her who loveth you not, the which is permitted of God for the chastisement of your sin and of your heinous ingratitude; and so but worse betide you not thereof, the thing will stand well. Alack, unfortunate Nicuola, whom hast thou loved and lovest? Thou hast e’en done the greatest things in the world to acquire this man’s favour and all hath been in vain; whilst you, Lattanzio, love Catella more than yourself and she reckoneth no whit of you. Go to, now, follow on this emprise, for in the end you will become aware of your error, and belike, when you will, there may be none to amend it.”

The young man, hearing what Pippa said, was well-nigh beside himself and knew not what to answer her; whilst Nicuola, who saw and heard the whole, would fain have come forth and said her own say anent the matter; however, being resolved to await the issue of the talk, she abode quiet. Pippa likewise awaited that which the young man should say; whereupon, as if aroused from

a heavy sleep, "Dame Pippa," quoth he, "I will e'en deal frankly with you, since you know my affairs better than I myself. True it is that I once loved Nicuola Nanni and know that she loved me; but she was sent forth the city by her father, I know not whither, and in the mean time I fell in love with Catella, daughter of Gerardo Lanzetti, who for some days made a show of loving me; then, I know not wherefore, she showed herself altogether averse to me and contrary to my desires, so that, an she be at the door or the window, whenas I pass through the street, she withdraweth indoors, so soon as she seeth me, and will no longer hearken to my letters or messages. Yesterday, more by token, I sent my page to see an he might avail to speak with her; but he hath never returned to render me an answer, so that I find myself bereaved at once of my mistress and of a good and most engaging servant. Had he returned and brought me news that she still persisted in her wonted obduracy, I was resolved to importune her no longer, but to seek me another lady, to whom my service should be more acceptable, since, to tell the truth, meseemeth a great folly to ensue one who shunneth me, to love one who loveth me not and to seek one who will none of me." "You may take your oath of that,"¹ rejoined Pippa. "A fine thing, indeed! Certes, for my part, I would not be so fond as to love one who wished me not well. But tell me, an it please you; if Nicuola yet wished you well, nay, loved you more than ever, what would you say thereof? Think you she would deserve to be loved of you?" "Indeed," replied the young man, "she would deserve that I should love her even as myself.

¹ *Pigliate allora le parole.*

But it may not be as you say, for that she must certainly be despited against me, inasmuch as she wrote to me again and again after her return to Jesi and I took no manner heed of her, nor know I where she is, so long is it since I saw her." "Nay, for that matter," rejoined Pippa, "I know you have seen her innumerable times in the last few days and have spoken very familiarly with her." Whereupon quoth Lattanzio, "Dame Pippa, you are mistaken in this." And she, "Nay, I am not mistaken, for that in good sooth I should know what I say and speak not to the wind. But harkye, an it were as I tell you and I caused you see for yourself that Nicuola loveth you more than ever, what would you do? And if she had been in your house and had served you and had done that which every least servant must do and had never been known of you, what would you think? Nay, make not such a show of wonderment, for the thing is e'en as I say. And so you may see I have told you the truth, I am ready to certify you thereof on such wise that you shall say as I say. But first answer me; if Nicuola had done as I tell you, what would she deserve?" "You tell me fables and dreams," answered Lattanzio; "but, if this were true, I know not what to say, save that it would behove me love her infinitely and make her mistress of myself." Quoth Pippa, "It is well," and calling Nicuola, bade her bring with her the page's clothes which she had worn.

Accordingly, Nicuola, who had heard all, took up the clothes and presented herself, all rosy in the face, before her nurse and her lover; whereupon quoth Pippa, "Here, Lattanzio, is your Nicuola; here is your Romolo; here is your so much desired page, who hath abidden with you day and night and hath for your love exposed herself to exceed-

ing great risk of her honour and her life. Here is she who, scorning all the world, hath recked of you only; and withal you have never known her in all this time." With this she told him the whole story of Nicuola's turning page, adding, "Now what say you?" Lattanzio abode as one half beside himself and stared at Nicuola, himseeming he dreamed, nor knew what to say, hearing that she had abidden with him, clad as a boy. However, he presently recovered himself somewhat and bethinking of the cruelty of Catella, than whom Nicuola was far fairer, and considering the latter's devotion and the risk to which she had exposed herself for excess of love, he said, well-nigh weeping, "Nicuola, I will not presently enter upon the labyrinth of vain excuses; but, an you be of such mind as Dame Pippa affirmeth, I will take you to wife, whenas you will." Nicuola, who desired nothing in the world more than this, could scarce contain herself for joy and casting herself at his feet, replied to him on this wise, saying, "My lord, since you, of your favour, deign to take me for yours, here am I at your service, for that myself and my pleasure will still be yours in everything." With this Lattanzio drew a ring from his finger and espoused her to his lawful wife in the presence of Pippa, saying, "So our affairs may be ordered with the more repute and honour, I will, as soon as I have dined, go speak with your father and demand you of him to wife. I am fain to believe that he will give you to me without opposition, and so we will celebrate the nuptials as it behoveth." Moreover, the better to substantiate the marriage thus contracted by word of mouth, Dame Pippa, ere Lattanzio departed, put the twain to bed in a chamber, and there they consummated holy matrimony, to the exceeding satisfaction of both parties. Then, having taken order for that which he purposed to do, Lattanzio departed and went to dinner;

after which he set out to visit Nicuola's father, whilst she herself went home with Pippa to meet Messer Ambrogio, by whom she was joyfully received.

Meanwhile, Paolo, so soon as he had dined, went forth the inn and made, all alone, for Catella's house. When he reached the head of the street, he saw Gerardo come out of the house and go I know not whither. Scarce was he gone when Catella showed herself at the window and saw Paolo; whereupon, thinking him her Romolo, she beckoned to him to enter, as soon as he was near the door, and he accordingly entered the house, resolved to certify himself what this meant. Catella in a trice came down the stairs and embracing him, kissed him amorously, for that she believed him to be Romolo; then, "Dear my life," quoth she, "and ultimate end of all my thoughts, thou makest thyself over-scarce. Certes, thou willest me not so much weal as I thee. Marry, I told thee my mind two days ago and that I would have none other than thyself to husband; let us go into this ground-floor room." Therewith she bade the maid watch for my lord's return and advise her thereof, what while she fell to kissing Paolo wantonly and bespeaking him with the softest of words, biting him sportively and seeming to languish in his arms. He, being nowise dull-witted and perceiving that she mistook him for another, feigned himself all inflamed and fallen well-nigh dumb for excess of love and kissed her again and again, sighing the while. Then, "My soul," quoth she, "I would fain have thee rid thyself of yonder master of thine, so we may be together whenassoever it liketh us." And he, "Let that not trouble you, for I will e'en find means to do without him." "Ay do thou, my life," rejoined Catella and still strained him to her breast and kissed him. Paolo, who was young and all disposed to satisfy her, feeling the

grass grow in the meadow, put his hand to her bosom and softly handled her breasts, which were yet, as a girl's, somewhat unripe, but round and firm as two apples; and seeing that she showed herself nowise coy, he took somewhat more courage and fell to plying his hands in those parts where is the ultimate goal of all amorous desire. Catella, who was all afire with love, seeing herself in the arms of so fair a youth, felt a pleasure she had never yet known and suffered him do as he would; whereupon Paolo, taking the occasion, threw her on a pallet bed and caused her taste a bitter sweetness the first lance he broke; but after, returning to the lists, he made shift to shiver other four lances, to the exceeding pleasure of the damsel, who would fain have run as many more. Thus engaged, they perceived not the flight of the hours and the servant-maid, going to do her occasions about the house, left the street-door open.

Meanwhile Gerardo came home and entered the house. As he passed the door of the chamber where the two lovers, weary with the jousts, had seated themselves on a bench to talk, he heard folk within and to say, "Who is there?" and to open the chamber-door with a thrust of his foot were one and the same thing. When he saw Paolo with his daughter, he mistook him for Nicuola, of whom, as hath already been said, he was sore enamoured; wherefore, the anger forsaking him into which he had entered, thinking a man to be with Catella, he stared at Paolo, and the more he eyed him, the more was he established in his opinion that it was Nicuola. Catella was half-dead at her father's appearance and Paolo trembled all over; but, when they saw the old man stand fast, without saying aught, they awaited the result with better courage. As hath already been said, Paolo and Nicuola his sister were so alike that

it was exceeding uneath for whoso was most familiar with them to discern which of them was the male and which the female ; wherefore Gerardo, after he had considered Paolo with the utmost wonderment, abode certain, knowing Ambrogio's son to be lost, that Nicuola had clad herself as a man and said to Paolo, "Nicuola, Nicuola, wert thou not who thou art, I warrant thee I had played thee and Catella an ill trick ;" then, turning to his daughter, he bade her go aloft and leave Nicuola there, for that he would bear the latter better company than she.

Catella accordingly departed, herseeming she had thitherto come off good cheap, since her father had nowise chidden her nor beaten her, but knew not nor might divine to what end he called Romolo Nicuola. Paolo, on the other hand, misdoubted him the old man had a mind to do with him as he had done with his daughter and said in himself, "This old fellow would fain fare a-pattens through the dry ; but the thing shall not go as he thinketh." Catella being gone, "Dear my Nicuola," quoth Gerardo, "what habit is this in which I see thee? How can Ambrogio thy father suffer thee go thus alone? Tell me the truth ; what camest thou to do here? Camest thou belike to see how I order the house and how I live? It is two days since I spoke with thy father, who was but then arrived in Jesi, and prayed him be pleased to resolve me an he would e'en give me thee to wife or not ; whereto he answered me that he would speak with me farther. Marry, I assure thee thou shalt have a good time with me and I will leave thee the governance of the house." He went on to declare that he could have of him none other than fair treatment ; what while Paolo said in himself, "I have e'en been twice mistaken to-day for some one else. This old fellow's daughter thinketh I am a certain Romolo of her acquaintance and he him-

self taketh me for my sister. Al gates, the daughter can scarce have been altogether deceived." Then said Gerardo, "Nicuola, dost thou answer me nothing? Tell me thy mind, for I will set everything right;" and offered to kiss her; but Paolo pushed him away, saying, "An you will aught, speak with my father and let me go, for I came hither I know not how." Whereupon the old man, never doubting him to be Nicuola, answered, "Ay, ay, begone; I will speak with thy father and make an end of the matter."

Paolo accordingly went away and repairing to his father's house, there found Lattanzio, who had presently sought Nicuola in marriage and to whom Ambrogio, knowing him for a rich and noble youth, had promised her. When Paolo entered, Lattanzio, seeing him, abode dumbfounded, and but that at that moment Ambrogio caused him touch his daughter's hand, he had taken him for Nicuola. The joy which Ambrogio felt at the coming of Paolo, whom he accounted dead, was beyond measure and description, more by token that he had not only recovered his son, but had honourably married his daughter. Great was the rejoicing and many the caresses which passed between the four; then, the collation being brought, behold, in came Gerardo, who, seeing Nicuola seated by Lattanzio and Paolo, whom he thought to be Nicuola, speaking with his father, cried, well-nigh beside himself, "God aid me! I know not if I sleep nor what I do!" and clasping his hands, abode all full of wonderment. Paolo, to whom Catella's savoury kisses had been supremely grateful, told his father he would do him a favour to marry him with Gerardo's daughter and Ambrogio, knowing that the match could not but be a good one, thereupon told Gerardo how he had married Nicuola to Lattanzio and prayed him consent to give Catella to Paolo to wife. Accordingly, this match also was concluded and so, out of

all hope, Ambrogio found himself to have recovered his son rich and well married and to have, to boot, honourably established his daughter. Meanwhile, Paolo let fetch his gear from the hostelry and keeping two serving-men for himself, requited the others on such wise that they avouched themselves content. All were full of joy, except Gerardo, who would fain have had Nicuola ; however, in the end he resigned himself to his lot ; whilst the two lovers and their wives applied to give themselves a good time and yet live merrily to this day.¹

¹ This is the story on which Shakspeare is supposed to have founded his "Twelfth Night."

Bandello

to the most illustrious and reverend lord prelate
Monseigneur Georges d'Armagnac,¹ Cardinal
of the title of Saints John and Paul.²

The news coming of the death of Henry, Eighth of the name King of England, and letters to that effect being read in the presence of the magnanimous princess, Madam Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, it was thereupon variously discoursed, according as it occurred to those present, of the said king's life and acts; whence there were some, who justly likened the said island of England to a meadow, which produceth various herbs, some good and some ill; for that, when we read the histories of the country, it is seen to have produced kings most eminent in arms, in courtesy and in integrity of life and truly worthy to be consecrated by good writers unto eternal remembrance, whilst, on the other hand, there have been others of whom may be affirmed that which that most impartial historian Livy writeth of Hannibal, to wit, that the many virtues which he ascribeth to him were counter-

¹ Bandello, "*Armignacco*."

² *i.e.* the church of that name at Rome, it being customary for each cardinal to be nominally appointed to the service of some church in the capital, the name of which constitutes his title. The prelate in question, who was successively Bishop of Rhodes and Archbishop of Toulouse and Avignon, received the red hat in the year 1544.

balanced by very great defaults. But methinketh it may justly be recorded that in many of the English kings their wickedness far overpassed such few good parts as they had, more by token that some showed themselves, not rulers, princes and kings, but most fell and cruel tyrants. Amongst the many other shameful and abominable vices wherewith they were sullied and defiled, cruelty and lust have still holden the chief place; nay, there have been some of them who showed themselves more athirst for human blood and more desirous thereof than the bee is of thyme. How many have there been of them aforetime who, without compassion and (what is worse) without cause, have wasted the most part of the nobility of the island, beheading this prince and strangling that and daily putting some nobleman or other to a cruel death! Nor were they content to rid themselves of those whom they called enemies; nay, they slew their own kinsfolk and those of their proper blood and cast their bodies for food to corbies, wolven and vultures. And it not sufficing their barbarous and inhuman cruelty to exterminate the good, they upraised most vicious men, taken from the lowest dregs of the populace, and made them barons and seigniors. King Edward,¹ father of that Edward who had King John of France to prisoner, was a very bad man and so full of vices that, except the name of King, there was no part in him which a good and upright man might commend. He let ignominiously behead the Duke of Lancaster, his uncle, for no otherwhat than to compleas a favourite of his, no less ribald and wicked than himself; and no great while after he caused two-and-twenty of the chief English seigniors and barons to be beheaded in one day. But God dealt this same Edward and his Hugh [Dispenser], who was a most seditious

¹ *i.e.* Edward II.

man and full of every wickedness, a fitting chastisement, for that the king's own son laid him in prison and there let put him to death, and Hugh was, after many torments, burned in a great fire. He,¹ who thus did to death his father in prison, slew his own mother on like wise and beheaded one of his uncles, hallowing the beginning of his reign with such abominable sacrifices. I pass over that Henry, who, to despoil the church of its temporal goods, let slaughter Thomas [à Becket,] Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of very holy and approved life; wherefore he was after constrained to render the realm of England tributary to the see of Rome. He was succeeded by John his son, who was like unto him and who, having usurped the crown, which pertained unto his elder brother's son Arthur, cruelly slew the latter with a mace of iron, as they rode together along the sea-shore, and cast him into the waves to feed the monsters of the deep. Nor was he content with this fratricide, but slew many other nobles and expelled well-nigh all the English bishops and prelates from the kingdom, for that they would not consent to his disorderly appetites. Moreover, in Aquitaine, which he then possessed, he exiled a great number of the prelates and clergy and robbed and spoiled the churches. It is known also that King Richard [the Third] let drown the Duke of Gloucester his uncle, he being then at Calais, in a butt of malmsey;² but his tyranny endured but a little while, for

¹ *i.e.* Edward III.

² It need hardly be said that this is a misstatement. Bandello seems to allude to the well-known story of George, Duke of Clarence, being by order of his brother Edward IV. and (it is supposed) by the machinations of his other brother, the Duke of Gloucester (afterwards Richard III.), put to death in the fantastic manner mentioned in the text, five years before the latter's accession to the throne.

that Henry the Seventh ousted him from the throne and he was slain, fighting. Now, should I offer particularly to recount all the crimes of so many past kings, it would behove me make a long Iliad thereof and time would fail me rather than matter. Suffice it, then, to relate a part of that which is told of Henry VII., father of that Henry VIII. who is newly dead. He, being banished the kingdom, repaired first to François, Duke of Brittany, and after to Charles VIII., King of France, who gave him men, ships and monies and with whose favour and aid he dethroned Richard, King of England, and made himself master of the island. He was no less athirst for human blood than the others and showed himself most ungrateful unto Charles VIII. Accordingly, it being discoursed of him and the other English kings and some new cruelty being still recounted, Messer Giulio Basso, saying that it behoved to change the discourse, related an adventure which befell one of the past kings of England. I listened attentively thereto and wrote it down, when it was finished; then, meseeming it was not unapt to be joined to my other novels, I bethought myself to give it a patron, as I have still done with all the rest. Wherefore, remembering me how readily you, of your favour, used, when you were here, to read these my said novels, I determined that this present one should be yours and should make bold to present itself to the eyes and hands of the public under your famous and glorious name, beseeching you, my lord, not to take it ill that I venture to avail myself, in so slight a thing as is this, of the favour of your name. For in truth it is not that I know not the loftiness and excellence of your exalted degree, which is justly deserving of every great and honourable title; but what else can I give you? The field of my feeble wit is so sterile that it produceth very few things;

and these few are so ill cultivated and so mean and rude that, of my sheer unableness to do more, needs must I give my lords and patrons of those fruits which my barren soil bytimes produceth. And since you deign so courteously to accept me to yours, lay the blame upon your own election, which forbore to choose a more profitable servant in my stead. Vouchsafe, therefore, to accept this my little gift in that gracious spirit wherewithal you use so benignly to receive whosoever recurrcth unto you; and so, kissing your hands, I commend myself to your favour, praying God to cause that which my muse hath already prognosticated of you¹ to be speedily seen of the world and long endure. Fare you well.

The Nine-and-Twentieth Story.

EDWARD III., KING OF ENGLAND, LOVETH
THE DAUGHTER OF A SUBJECT OF HIS
AND [ULTIMATELY] TAKETH HER TO
WIFE.

I having heard the many and various discoursements which have here been holden, meseemeth that of these Kings of England, be they of the White Rose or the Red, coming as they do all of one stock, it may be said that other men's wives pleased them well-nigh all and that they were greedier of human blood than ever Crassus of gold. Nay, an we had no cognizance of the others, this one, who is said to be presently dead, hath shed so much

¹ Referring apparently to some poem in praise of the cardinal, with which I am not acquainted.

blood that it may indeed be said that neither among Christians nor barbarians hath there been any prince or tyrant in this our age so cruel but he may, compared with him, be accounted pitiful. That a prince, to maintain himself in his dominion, should slay whoso seeketh to oust him therefrom, is not a thing unused or strange, for that, to tell the truth, the kingship suffereth not two. And were it permitted me so to speak and to mingle things sacred with those profane, I would call to mind that our Lord God Almighty suffered not proud Lucifer in heaven, inasmuch as the wretched and ambitious angel thought to even himself with Him. But that it is good or even lawful to slaughter any (as it is used to say) in cold blood and because one refuseth to comply with my disorderly appetites, to kill him, I can never anywise believe; wherefore bytimes I think shame in myself whenas I see some so ready to deprive men of their lives, not by way of justice, but only to satisfy their unnatural humours. Not so did Soliman, nowadays emperor of the Turks; he is not yet known to have imitated his father and forefathers, who were all inclined to slaughter these and those and especially those of their own Ottoman blood; for that never, to our knowledge, hath he put any to death of caprice, but only by way of justice and to preserve military discipline. And yet he is a Mahometan and hath reigned seven-and-twenty years. Some belike will say that he let slaughter Abraino Bassà¹ his especial favourite; and I will tell you what is said thereof at Venice of men versed in the Turkish Court. They affirm that Soliman, finding himself ill-served of Abraino in the wars against the Persians, he having failed to execute certain orders

¹ *i.e.* Ibrahim Pasha.

which he had given him, determined to rid himself of him; but for that, in the beginning, whenas Abraino was in favour, he had given him a very ample safe-conduct and was loath to fail of his word and troth, he several times took counsel with his priests, who (I know not on what laws they founded that their decision) resolved him that, an he let slaughter Abraino in his sleep, he would not break the safe-conduct; and certain it is that the hapless Abraino was put to death, whilst asleep. But it irketh me to go straying thus amongst slain folk, you others having told of so many thereof and I myself of some; wherefore, wishing henceforth to leave these melancholy matters, full of blood and tears, and tell that for which I set myself to speak, I will say but this word, to wit, that, like as it was natural to the Appii to be enemies of the Roman populace and as the Scipios were fated to conquer in Africa, even so meseemeth it is proper unto these English kings to exterminate those of their own blood and persecute the nobility, to massacre ecclesiastics and steal the good of the church.

Now, to come to my proposition, you must know that Edward, King of England, he, I mean, who was so dire an enemy to the realm of France, waged also sore war with the Scots and harassed them amain, as is to be read in the English chronicles. He took to wife the daughter of the Count of Hainault and begat on her divers sons, of whom the first-born, called also Edward, Prince of Wales, a young man very famous in war, overcame the French army not far from Poitiers and taking King John prisoner at that feat of arms, sent him to his father in England. King Edward, then, being at war with the Scots, bestowed upon William Montague, his captain, the earldom of Salisbury, for that he had fortified Roxburgh in the Marches of Scotland and

achieved other goodly emprises, and honourably married him to a very noble young lady ; after which he despatched him into Flanders in company of the Earl of Suffolk, where they were both made prisoners by the French and carried to the Louvre at Paris. Meanwhile the Scots laid siege to Salisbury Castle, where the countess comported herself no whit as a delicate young lady or as a timid woman, but approved herself a Camilla or a Penthesilea ; governing her soldiers with such prudence, valiance and fortitude and harassing her enemies on such wise that they were constrained, hearing that the king was on his way to succour the place, to raise the siege.

The king, who had already departed Warwick and came towards Salisbury, to offer the Scots battle, hearing that they were gone away, was about to turn back, but, being notified of the great breaches which they had made in Salisbury Castle, determined to go view it. The countess, whose name was Alice, being advertised of the king's coming, made such necessary preparations as were possible in so short a time and so soon as she heard that he drew near the castle, went incontinent to meet him, having first let open all the gates of the place. Now she was the fairest and lovesomest lady of all the island and much as she overpassed all the others in beauty, she was no less superior unto all in modesty and goodly manners. When the king saw her so fair and so richly appavelled, the ornaments of her head and of all her person marvellously adding to her native charms, himseemed he had never in his life beheld a fairer or lovesomer creature, and accordingly he fell incontinent enamoured of her. She bowed herself reverently before him and offered to kiss his hands ; the which he suffered not, but courteously, I will not say amorously, catching her in his arms, kissed her. All the

barons and seigniors and other gentlemen, who were with the king, abode beyond measure astonished at the sight of such incomparable beauty and thought to see, not a mortal woman, but something divine. But over all the rest the king was full of extreme marvel and could not turn his eyes elsewhither; when the lady, who was a goodly and sweet speaker, after she had done him reverence, thanked him heartily and in apt terms for the succour which he had prepared, saying that the Scots, so soon as they heard him to have departed Warwick, had raised the siege, having no heart to await him, and so, discoursing together of things late occurred, they entered the castle in triumph and rejoicing.

What while the dinner was making ready, the king, who came to see the breaches made by the Scots artillery, felt himself so battered by excess of love and so vast a breach opened through the sight to his heart by the flashing of the lady's fair eyes that he could find no means of restoring himself; nay, the more he thought thereon, the greater waxed the ruin done and himseemed momentarily he felt himself smitten with the beams of those bright orbs nor could turn his mind to otherwhat. He leant, all alone, against a casement, thinking upon his love and debating how he might acquire the lady's good will; whereupon she, seeing the king thus alone and pensive, accosted him reverently and said to him, "Sire, why stand you thus in deep thought and wear so melancholy a countenance? It behoveth you presently to rejoice and abide in mirth and gladness, for that, without breaking a lance, you have driven off your enemies, who avow themselves vanquished, since they have not dared to await you, so that needs should you be of good cheer and gladden with your blithe aspect your soldiers and all your people, who depend upon your

countenance. For how shall they be gladsome, seeing that you, who are their head and chief, show them not a good countenance?"

The king, hearing the sweetness of her angelical voice and hearkening to what she said, determined to discover to her his love and render her, if possible, amenable to his desires. Marvellous, certes, and most searching are the flames of love and exceeding various of operation, working divers effects according to the various natures of those upon whom they take hold. See yonder man, inflamed with most ardent love, who day and night doth no otherwhat than complain of the tormenting fire wherein he miserably consumeth, and bemoaning himself to his friends and fellows, hath a river of words in his mouth, which floweth without stint and never drieth up; but, whenas he seeth his mistress and thinketh to tell her how involved for her he is in mortal anguish, he trembleth like a boy before his master and falleth dumb on such wise that he cannot avail to utter a word; and so, burning in silence, he will consume months and years. Yet he, who thus trembleth and is silent in the presence of a woman, would not budge a step for an armed man or two and would not only well, but with a bold and assured voice, speak out his reasons¹ before great princes and kings. Another, again, no sooner falleth enamoured and feeleth the liquid, subtle and venomous fire of love course through all his veins, leaving not a drachm [of blood] in him but is all a-boil, than he becometh so valiant that, whenassoever he hath occasion to bespeak his mistress, he boldly discovereth to her all his sufferance; nay, oftentimes, the first day of his love is also the first to discover his flame.

¹ Syn. "declare his rights."

Of this latter sort was King Edward, who, seeing the countess silent, thus bespoke her with piteous speech, saying, with eyes full of tears, "Alack, dear my lady, how far removed (woe is me!) are my thoughts from that which you belike conceive!" Thus saying, he was constrained to let sundry tears drop from his eyes; then, "I have a most tormenting thought," quoth he, "which importuneth me sore nor is it possible for me to banish it from my heart. It hath been born in me since I came hither to you and I know not how to resolve myself thereof." The lady, seeing these the king's strange fashions, was silent and dared not speak nor knew what to say; whereupon, with a piteous sigh, "How say you, lady?" asked he, "can you not give me any comfort?" She, somewhat reassured and thinking everything save that which was in effect, answered, saying, "Sire, I know not what succour to proffer you, unknowing what ill it is which seemeth so to oppress you. An you be sorrowful that the King of Scotland hath wasted our country, the hurt is not such in truth as to merit that so great a person should afflict himself; more by token that, Godamercy, you are in case to requite the Scots therefor with double scathe, as you have otherwhiles done. Sire, it is time to come dine and leave these thoughts."

The king, thereupon, taking courage, said to her, "Alack, dear my lady, I feel my heart burst in my body for excess of anguish and must needs, an I would live, discover to you the secret of my soul and the cause of my tormenting pain, meseeming it were unfitting both to you and to myself that I should make others cognizant thereof. I must tell you, then, that, when I arrived at Salisbury and saw your incredible and divine beauty, your discreet and modest manners, your grace and valiance and all the other gifts

which shine in you like gems enchased in bright and burnished gold, I felt myself incontinent your prisoner and was enkindled on such wise by the divine rays of those your fair eyes that I am no longer mine own master, but depend upon you in and for all; so that my life and death are in your hands. If it please you receive me for yours and have compassion upon me, I shall live the gladdest and joyfullest man in the world; but, if, of my ill fortune, you show yourself contrary to this my love and deign not to solace the fierce pain which goeth visibly consuming me, little by little, like wax before the fire, I shall speedily end my days, it being as little possible to me to live without your favour as it is to a man to live without a soul."

With this the king made an end of his speech, awaiting the lady's response, and she, when she saw that he was silent, with grave and modest countenance thus replied to him, saying, "If, sire, other than you had held this discourse to me, I know well what my reply should have been; but, knowing you do but divert yourself and take your disport of me by way of jest, nay, belike you do it to try me, I will tell you, to end this parley, that meseemeth contrary to all right and reason that so generous and exalted a prince as yourself should think (much less offer) to bereave me of my honour, which should be dearer to me than my life. Nor can I anywise believe that you make so little account of my father and my husband, who for you are prisoners in the hands of the King of France, our mortal enemy. Certes, sire, you would be very little valued, if this your ill-regulated desire were known, and eke of me you would never gain aught, inasmuch as I have never thought (and still less do I presently think,) to put my consort to shame, for that the marriage-faith, which I vowed to him, when he espoused me, I mean to keep pure and

bright, what while I abide on life. Nay, were it in my thought to do such wickedness with whosoever it might be, it would behove you, sire, for the sake of the services of my father, my husband and all my kinsfolk, sharply to rebuke me thereof and deal me due chastisement therefor. Wherefore do you, noble sir, you who use to overcome and subjugate others, overcome and subdue yourself; put away from your heart these disorderly and dishonourable desires and take thought to the conservation and augmentation of the realm."

Meanwhile, those who were with the king, seeing these strait discouragements between himself and the countess, imagined that they spoke of the siege and of the past war; and at this juncture up came the seneschal and announced that the dinner was ready. The king accordingly went and seated himself at table, but ate little or nothing, abiding all pensive and discontent. Whensoever he had commodity thereof, he fixed his greedy and impassioned eyes upon the lady and so, seeking to assuage the poignant flames which cruelly consumed him, he still made them fiercer and like the bird taken in the lime, entangled himself the faster in the amorous snare. The barons and others marvelled amain to see this unwonted constraint on his part, but knew not withal to hit upon the true cause thereof. The king sojourned that day at Salisbury, viewing the breaches made by the Scots and reasoning at length thereof with his officers, but still had in mind the lady's sage replies, and the truer and honester he esteemed them, the more he fretted himself therefor, despairing of being able to accomplish his intent, which was all fixed upon taking amorous pleasure with her. Marry, it is a significant thing that well-nigh all these wanton lovers, whenas they are in company with their

fellows, if they have any spark of civility or gallantry, still praise those ladies whom they love, uplifting them with words of honour to the third heaven, and are never weary of exalting and commending them. Moreover, in general, when they have given them all the praises which occur to them, for beauty, lovesomeness, gentillesse, modesty, sprightliness, prudence, fair fashions and urbanity, the rarest and sublimest virtue which they most magnificently extol in them and study to celebrate in song is that (never sufficiently to be praised in every woman) of chastity and modesty. This virtue is holden of such worth and such price in women and rendereth them so worshipful and worthy of true admiration that, had they all the graces and laudable parts which behove unto the feminine sex, yet lacked this alone, they would altogether lose their reputation and their honour and become common women. Now these lovers, albeit in their mistresses they so praise the precious treasure of chastity, are nevertheless, if in effect they know them to be chaste, sore chagrined thereat and would have them be most chaste, rigid and severe with all other men, so but they themselves find them pliable and amenable unto their own dishonest appetites ; wherefore, availing not to accomplish their lascivious desire, that chaste mind and modest resolution, which they used before so to praise and commend, they presently call cruelty, arrogance and pridefulness. So was it with King Edward, who, seeing that the lady persevered in her chaste purpose and nowise inclined unto his prayers, but showed herself ever frowarder and more unpliant, declared her to be a fierce tigress, a most intractable and cruel woman. Then, having no time to sojourn at Salisbury, for other affairs which befell, but hoping to find a better occasion to accomplish his purpose, he arose on the morrow betimes and departed. At taking

leave of the lady, he bespoke her softly, beseeching her be pleased to take better thought to his case and have pity upon him, and she reverently answered him, saying that she prayed God to put that fantasy out of his head and give him the victory over his enemies.

Meanwhile, the earl her husband was liberated from prison and being a little after, whether for hardships suffered or for whatsoever other cause, assailed with a very grievous sickness, presently died thereof, no succour availing him; whereupon, he having no children, or male or female, by Alice his wife nor other heir to succeed him, the earldom of Salisbury reverted to the king's hand. The lady, beyond measure woeful at the death of her husband, retired, after some days, to the house of her father, Richard, Earl of Warwick, who, for that he was one of the king's councillors, abode in London. There was then war in Brittany between Charles of Blois, who had usurped the duchy, and the Countess of Montfort, the sometime Duchess. The King of France favoured Charles of Blois and Edward lent all the aid in his power to the countess, having first made a truce with the Scots. Now by reason of this war he then abode in London and knowing that Alice had retired thither, he thought to get some solacement of his love, for that he still had this thought at heart and might nowise turn his mind elsewhither. The lady was now from five to six-and-twenty years old and was (as hath before been said) beyond measure fair, conjoining with her extreme beauty and lovesomeness and her goodly fashions supreme honesty; the which for a while occasioned the king a very bitter life and in the end brought her eternal glory, as you shall hear.

The king, then, being more in love than ever and doing all that was apt to gain a lady's love and favour and

withal winning to nothing profitable for his desires, was like to despair, but, being either unwilling or unable to do himself free from loving, neither knew to die, nor did it anywise profit him to abide on life. He had now more than nine months loved thus unhappily and yet, whensoever he saw her, he was afire with new desire, loving her over every created thing and doing her honour and reverence, not as his subject, but as the sole empress of the world. Algate, he so far restrained himself and held the curb of his appetite on such wise in hand that, as most he might, he kept that his most fervent passion hidden from all but one most trusty chamberlain of his, whom he had made cognizant of all and with whom he oftentimes discoursed of the lady and of her cruel obduracy and rigour, himseeming he thus somewhat allayed his amorous sufferance.

Every lover, indeed, should be secret, for that love requireth secrecy and fidelity, and not only doth it behove him to be sparing of words which may give others cognizance and token what lady he loveth, but he should eke be very discreet in his actions, so he may not by over-many passings before his mistress's house or frequent paying court to her with ravings and rodomontades after the Spanish fashion, show forth to the vulgar that which should be kept most secret. I will not presently speak of those who no sooner see a woman who pleaseth them than they begin to court her with more ceremonies than are practised in the [Sistine] chapel at Rome and demean themselves on such wise that in less than a week the whole city is ware that they have set their thoughts upon such a lady. Such men, an their mistress go to church, follow in her footsteps and forsake not her traces night or day. Moreover, in church they post themselves over against her, fixing their eyes

on her face on such wise that it seemeth they are all intent thereon and are altogether absorbed in contemplation thereof. The same fashion they keep at balls, sports and entertainments and accompany her about the streets with hot and heavy sighs, so that she can take no step but she still hath the noyous sound of sighs in her ears and the unseemly fashions of these gallant lovers before her eyes. Nor are they content with these public extravagances, fearing belike lest men remark not that which they do, but they must e'en notify them thereof with their own mouths; inasmuch as they can speak of no otherwhat, whereassoever they find themselves, than of their mistresses, and themseemeth they should be holden of more account for these their fooleries. But God keep all ladies, who have aught of gentillesse, from these braggart crackbrains, who are all, to boot, so sage that, an they get but a kind look, they publish it in the market-places. You may conceive, then, what they would do, should they receive of their mistresses any especial favour. Methinketh they would send trumpeters through every corner of the quarter, to proclaim aloud these their amorettes. Now, because I blame these shameless lovers and admonish ladies to keep themselves from them, as from the plague, you must not think but that I commend (and that yet more earnestly) those who love secretly and order themselves on such wise that they contrive to give their mistresses to know that they are their servants, without making an outcry, without filling the air with sighs, as if they had a volcano in their entrails, and without making the folk aware of aught. There be some who, an a man love a lady of quality, will not have him manifest his love to any one in the world, but hold that he should burn and suffer in silence, except he have

of his own resort a means of discovering himself to the beloved lady; but I am of a contrary opinion and am convinced that it behoveth whoso loveth, be he high or low, to have one trusted friend and no more, who shall be the confidant of his thoughts; inasmuch as it is beyond doubt that whoso loveth fervently hath oftentimes his eyes and mind blinded on such wise that, in many cases which betide, he may not of himself avail to disentangle or help himself without others' aid. Certain it is that, except he have some one to counsel him, he will commit enormous errors and hurried away by blind passion, will recklessly carry his unbridled wishes into execution; nay, belike he will do such a folly that Solomon, with all his wisdom, might not avail to amend it. But, an he have a friend, whom he hath by long experience proved faithful and prudent, he may freely discharge and unburthen himself into his bosom of every oppression of his thoughts and every secret of his heart; whereupon the friend, having the eyes of his understanding unobscured of amorous passion, will know to counsel him of the whole without peril and will, according to need, devise a thousand opportune expedients, whereof whoso is enamoured and tangled in the toils of love is unapt to avail himself. Moreover, an the lover find himself involved by shifts of adverse fortune in a thousand annoys, if he see himself scorned and his service undear to the lady of his thoughts, how, I say, may he avail, alone and unaided, to succour himself and to find a remedy for his chagrins, except he have one to whom he may impart his sufferances and with whom he may bytimes take counsel which way is the surest and which means the aptest to be taken? For a pleasure and a contentment which the lover hath, but knoweth not to whom to impart it, yieldeth not half

the joyance afforded by that which is shared with a friend ; for that the joys and consolations which Love giveth his followers, an they remain shut in one sole breast, fall sadly short of complete fruition and abide cold and languid ; whereas those which are discovered to a trusty friend wax ever greater and afford new solacement, whenassoever they are recalled. And that which I say of a man, I am fain to believe behoveth no less unto a woman in love, women being in general weaker and more delicately fashioned than men and by nature more compassionate and pitiful and less apt to support the amorous flames, an they be excessive ; nay, they love (forgive me, you men,) more fervently and with more tenderness than we, unknowing to feign and dissemble as many men do, who account it a triumph to beguile this woman and that.

To return to our story, every one knew the king to be afire with love, for the unwonted life which he led ; but whom he loved there was none might divine, for that he, not to betray himself, paid great court to all ladies and did all reverence, according as their degree merited ; but over all and far more than all was the fair Alice revered and adored by him. She, being very shrewd and quick-witted, lightly perceived that the king's thought had not changed for change of place and that he was still the same as he had discovered himself to her at Salisbury. Algames, she recked nothing of his love and was no whit moved from her chaste purpose, but inclined herself unto him as king and seignior, whenas it behoved her do him honour and reverence, showing withal I know not what in her countenance, which gave him to understand that he laboured in vain to acquire and enjoy her love. However, the coyer and more contrary she showed herself, the more enkindled waxed he and the more did he enforce himself with

amorous gestes and open demonstrations to possess her of that which was already most manifest in her eyes. Wherefore the discreet and lovesome Alice, seeing the king's malady wax greater and go from ill to worse nor having withal the least thought of compleasing him, determined, so she might afford him no occasion of doing aught which might bring reproach upon herself, to eschew everything which might foster his passion for her. Accordingly, she fell to going seldom out of the house and showed herself but rarely at the window; and whenas it behoved her go abroad, she clad herself very meanly and avoided all streets and places where herseemed she might encounter the king.

Edward soon became aware of this her practice and feeling himself like to die for excess of amorous chagrin, was well-nigh for using force; but, for that the true lover never despaireth, nay, still goeth with every endeavour ensuing his mistress's steps, as doth a sagacious dog the tracks of a wild beast, and seeketh till he e'en find some vestige of her, he wrought to such purpose that Alice seldom left the house but he knew both when and whither she went; wherefore he went three or four times to meet her and at the least to feed his eyes on her sweet and lovesome sight. She, as hath been said, put off her wonted habiliments and wore coarse clothes, that savoured more of the nun than of the laywoman; but the canker had already eaten so deep into the king's breast that all the lady's devices to allay it brought him no whit of profit; for that, as truly saith our gentlest Petrarch, never was arrow-wound abated for bow-slacking; and moreover, such was Alice's native beauty that, had she in very deed donned the roughest and meanest stuff in the world, she had still showed most fair. The king, then, seeing that for nothing he could do would she vouchsafe to take pity of his love,

let sundry whiles bespeak her by his trusty chamberlain, promising her all that she might avail to ask him by word of mouth and plying her with such loving words as men are wont to use on the like occasions. But she, being steadfastly established in her chaste purpose, gave the chamberlain the same replies as she had given the king at Salisbury; he might say what he would and use as much eloquence and art in speech as ever Demosthenes or Cicero, but never could he get of her a fair answer. When the king learned this her obduracy, which himseemed was over-harsh, it caused him infinite chagrin; nevertheless, he forbore not to try the lady's mind afresh and that thrice or four times; but all was labour in vain, inasmuch as she was resolved rather to die than lose her chastity.

Now Edward, seeing that nothing he might do profited him aught, nay, that the thing went daily from bad to worse, misdoubted him her father was the cause of that her great rigour, for he might not believe that such unyielding obduracy might anywise harbour in a young woman's heart, except it were assiduously fostered and fomented by some person of authority. This belief was to him a cause of infinite melancholy and of supreme chagrin, forasmuch as strict justice is a grievous offence unto whoso loveth; wherefore, after revolving various thoughts and devices in himself and concluding to reserve force for a last resort, he bethought himself, being blinded with concupiscence, frankly to bespeak her father and ply him with cajoleries, blandishments and promises of advancement in estate to such effect that he should by his means get possession of his daughter. See, now, to what blindness and to what enormous error doth this lustful and disorderly passion bring the man who suffereth himself to be overcome withal, so that it maketh him believe it a light thing to persuade a

father to make traffic of his own daughter and lend her out at hire, as she were a hackney. Marry, such as these seem altogether to have lost the use of their reason; for that, if indeed there be whiles found fathers (and far oftener mothers) who are so ribald and so little worth that they sell their own daughters for a price, as butchers sell meat at the shambles, we cannot withal but blush for ourselves, whenassoever we think to offer to persuade them to so shameful a wickedness, much more impudently to bespeak them of such a thing. King Edward, indeed, was throughly overcome with blind appetite and beside himself, when he bethought himself to bespeak Earl Richard of his case; wherefore, having come to this determination and pondered and repondered that which he should say, he imparted the whole to his trusty chamberlain and sought his counsel of this also. The chamberlain, who was a discreet and well-advised youth, himseeming out of all reason to seek to use a father's help in debauching his daughter, declared that it were ill done of the king to unbosom himself of the matter to Earl Richard and counselled him to be rather on his guard against him, of all men, alleging many reasons which moved him to say this and avouching himself firmly persuaded that the father would never consent to do such a wickedness. Moreover, come thereof what might, himseemed, quoth he, it was an exceeding dishonourable act and one that might belike one day engender some parlous error, to require the earl of such a thing. But he preached to deaf ears; the king, having gotten this maggot in his head and himseeming it should profit him, would e'en put it in execution at all hazards.

Now Earl Richard was a very doughty man of his person and renowned for warlike prowess, whose skill and valour had, a little before, been signally approved in the wars

waged in Guienne and had contributed no little to the advantage of the English. He had been reared from a boy with the king's father and had long sojourned at court in high repute and consideration, having been oftentimes set to execute honourable emprises, of which he had still acquitted himself with worship; wherefore he was beloved and respected of all in the island. Edward, then, being resolved to bespeak him of his case and to require him of aid, sent to him, saying that he had matters of confidence to impart to him, and the earl thereupon came forthright to the palace, where the king awaited him all alone in a privy closet. There, having made due obeisance to his sovereign and the door being shut by the latter's commandment, he abode expecting his commands. Edward, who was seated upon a camp-bed, bade the earl sit by his side, and albeit he, for reverence, consented not thereto, in the end he seated himself there, by commandment of the king, who would e'en have it so. The latter abode awhile, without saying a word; then, after heaving many broken sighs, he thus began to speak, with eyes full of tears. "I have caused you, earl mine," quoth he, "come hither on a most grave occasion of mine, which importeth no less to me than my proper life; nay, meknoweth not if in any chance that hath aye befallen me (and withal there have befallen me very many parlous chances) I have ever found myself in so fashious and noyous a predicament as this wherein I presently am; for that I feel myself so outwarred and overmastered of my sufferings that, except some succour be shortly afforded them, they will most certainly bring me to the miserablest death ever man died. Happy, indeed, may he be styled who governeth his senses with the curb of reason nor suffereth himself be carried away of his unbridled desires, and whoso deemeth otherwise, I hold

should be called not a man, but rather an animal without reason; for that in this alone are we different from the beasts, that all they do they do and carry into execution in obedience to their natural instinct and in all things ensue appetite; but we can and should measure our actions with the measure of reason and choose that which seemeth to us justest and most in conformity with rectitude. And if bytimes we stray from the true and right road, the fault is e'en our own, who, enamoured of a seeming and false delight, suffer ourselves be drawn by our disorderly appetites out of the right path and the sure way and run headlong into profound abysses. Wretch that I am and thrice wretched, who see and apprehend all these things and know how parlously my unruly appetite lureth me forth of the straight road, yet cannot nor may return to the true path and turn my back upon these fond thoughts! I say, I cannot, but I should say, I will not; nay, indeed, I would e'en, but I have suffered myself to be so far carried away of my passions, of my appetites and of my ill-regulated desires and have given so loose a rein to my unseemly wishes that I may no longer avail to turn back. I am as one allured into a thicket wood in pursuit of a wild beast, who followeth so far that he after knoweth not to find his way back; nay, the more he goeth about therein, the more he entangleth and loseth himself in the wood and the farther he strayeth from the true road. Now I have said this much to you, earl mine, not because I am unaware of my grievous error, but for that you, seeing that I am no longer mine own master nor have my liberty in hand, may concern yourself for me and have compassion on me; for that, to tell the truth, I am so entangled in the snare of my unbridled desires that, although I see the good, nevertheless I cleave fast

unto the ill. I, woe is me, I, who have so gloriously overcome mine enemies by land and by sea, I who have made the English name revered, honoured and dreaded throughout all France, feel myself so bounden and overcome and brought low by a headstrong and disorderly appetite that it is no longer in my power to loose and uplift myself anew. This my life, which may rather be called death, is so full of pain and mortal anguish that I am the harbouirage of all ills and the sole receptacle of every misery. And what availing excuse can be found for my default? Certes, were there any to be found therefor, it were exceeding weak, frivolous and vain. Only one there is that, I being yet young and a widower, mesemeth not unnatural that I should have suffered myself be ensnared in the toils of love. And since I have striven sore to regain the reins and curb of my desires and my every endeavour hath proved vain, I know not what remedy to essay for my tormenting pains, save to cast myself, dear my earl, into your arms. You, of your favour, in my father's time, often and often risked and whiles shed your blood in a thousand emprises, which were no less perilous than glorious, and but a little while ago you have abundantly done the like for me in Scotland and in France; nay, you have upholden me (who knoweth it better than I?) in many parlous cases with the best of counsel and have shown me the right way to bring my undertakings to the easiest and most desirable issue; nor have you once shown yourself anywise backward or laggard in doing me service or advantage. Why, then, should I not look to you in my grievous need for all such aid as man may expect from man? Who is there will refuse to spend his speech in my favour, when he hath already spent his blood for my profit? For I, O earl, seek of you none other succour

than of words, for the which, an they bear that fruit which I may hope and expect, so but you consent to serve me with a good heart, I proffer you to share my kingdom with you and to give you such part thereof as shall be most to your liking. And if belike that which I shall ask of you seem to you over-hard to put in execution, consider, I pray you, that a service is the more acceptable, the more difficult it is to do, the more travail and unease are endured thereanent and the more pains he taketh who studieth to serve his friend. Think likewise what it is to have a king at your command, of whom you may avail yourself at your every will and of whose all you may dispose as it shall most please you. You have four sons and cannot honourably content them all; wherefore I pledge you my faith that I will make such provision for the three younger that they shall have no cause to envy their elder brother. You know, moreover, how I know to gratify him who serveth me. Wherefore, an you be of my mind anent that which I desire of you, you shall speedily see the fruit that will ensue to you thereof; for, if I have not been ungrateful unto others, much less will I be so unto you, in whose hands I put my life and my death." Here the king was silent, hindered with heavy sobs and choked with hot tears, could speak no farther.

The earl, hearing these words from his king, whom he no little loved, and seeing the tears which bore manifest witness of his enduring and grievous sufferance, nor knowing the cause thereof and imagining everything save that for which he was summoned, was moved with the utmost compassion and made the king so ample a proffer of himself, of his sons and of all he had that to do more was impossible. "Do but command me, my lord," quoth he,

without any hesitation, "that which you would have me do ; for I swear to you and pledge you my faith, the which is already bounden to you by homage, that in so far as my tongue, my wit and my powers may avail, you shall be faithfully and loyally served by me. Nor am I bounden to serve you with these alone ; nay, but, in case of need, I am ready to expose my life for you to the hazard of a thousand deaths." Who indeed in like case had answered his prince otherwise ? And who had thought that the king should make such a request of Earl Richard, whom he knew to be a gentleman of honour ? But oftentimes there betide things past all human belief, as in truth was this.

The king, thereupon, all dyed a thousand colours in the face, but yet made bold by love, bespoke him on this wise, saying, in a voice that trembled withal somewhat, "With your Alice alone, dear my earl, it resteth to make me infinitely content and you and all your house happy ; for that I love her more than my life and am so enkindled by her divine beauties that I cannot live without her. Wherefore, an you desire to serve me, an my life be dear to you, do you persuade her to love me and have compassion upon me. Nor must you think that I ask such a service of so loyal and perfect a servant and friend as I have still reputed and now more than ever repute you without extreme heart-grief and infinite shamefastness ; but be love my excuse in your eyes, love which can far more than you or I and which hath so bewitched me and ravished me forth of myself with the goodly fashions of your Alice and hath so fixed my soul, my heart and mine every thought upon her that without her it is impossible for me to live. I have used mine every endeavour and done all in my power to banish this love and purge myself of so pestilent a venom ; but all my strength hath proved vain and my wisdom hath profited me nothing.

I who thought to conquer the whole world, who made no account of a thousand armies and who thought to enter upon a ball whenas I entered into battle, I am overcome and captived, woe's me, by a young lady! I, who have gloriously overcome others, am presently unable to overcome myself! Remember you not how many a time you and the Duke of Lancaster have bespoken me, nay, whiles, to boot, chidden me, for that I overwearied myself and that my much going in chase of stags, boars and other wild beasts might bring me great hurt? Think you I underwent those fatigues, those fasts, those vigils and exposures to the wind, the rain and the freezing snows and ice of winter for my pleasure and that I took delight in coursing, like one frenzied, through valleys and over hills and mountains and passing this and that water, without taking aught of repose? Nay, my carl, I sought by dint of ceaseless riding and going bytimes afoot, of tireless exercising, of enduring such sore hardships and toils as I underwent all day long and in fine leading so hard and weariful a life, to tame and mortify this my raging appetite, to the end that, if I broke not or unlinked the mighty chains of so fervent and obstinate a love, I might at the least somewhat loose them, and if peace were not vouchsafed me, I might yet purchase me some little truce. But meseemeth all was thrown away and nothing availeth me; nay, this my lively love thriveth on hardships and waxeth hourly greater. Indeed, I live not neither enjoy weal or repose save only in so much as I see her or speak or think of her; in fine, I am reduced to such a pass, since she will no more hearken to my messages nor reply to my letters, that needs must I either, at the risk of shame and ruin to all our house, find a remedy for my so anguishful, dire and tormenting sufferings or else die thereof. Yet would I have death tarry as long as

possible and be the last thing to which I have recourse ; wherefore let it not irk you, my earl, to take that care of my life whereof you see I have need, and if you desire towns, lands, castles, offices, treasures, benefices of the church or otherwhat in my power, here is a blank patent subscribed with my hand and confirmed with my seal. Go and let one of my secretaries write therein that which you will, for all shall be no otherwise than well." With this he placed the parchment, which he had made ready beforehand, in the earl's hand and abode, with a fearful and palpitating heart, all intent upon his lips, awaiting his response.

The earl, hearing his lord's unseemly and dishonourable request, waxed all red in the face, and cast the patent upon the bed ; then, full of trouble, of wonderment, of stupefaction and eke of honest indignation, he could not awhile unknot his tongue to speak ; however, in the end, collecting himself, he thus replied to the expectant and enamoured king, saying, " Ill, sire, at the pass whereat I presently find myself, do I know what to say, seeing myself reduced to a most strait and perilous dilemma ; for that, an I offer to do either one of the two things which occur to my mind, it cannot but be to me a cause of exceeding great peril. I am bounden to you by the bond of my troth that there shall be nothing in the world, how hard and difficult soever it be, but I will do it for your service and your assainment ; the which I am resolved and intend to observe, for that I had rather die than anywise fail of my faith. I will accordingly set out to my daughter all that you require of me, together with the manner on which I have heard it from you ; but I must e'en remind you that I may pray her thereof, but not enforce her ; suffice it that from my lips she shall learn your whole mind. But, to enter upon another discourse, I

must tell you that I marvel and grieve no little at you. Be it permitted me, my lord, rather freely to vent my bitter chagrin with yourself than to have occasion to complain unto others. It grieveth me infinitely that you should think to put such an affront upon my blood, which was never in whatsoever emprise sparing of itself for your service, honour and benefit, whereas a worthy and honourable guerdon might be looked for from you. Tell me, is this the recompense which I and my children should have expected for our devotion? An you choose not to give us of your own, an it please you not to greaten us, at the least seek not to bereave us of honour and brand us with eternal infamy. Nay, what worse could we expect from our chiefest enemy? Will you, sire, go about at one blow to despoil my daughter of honour, me of every contentment and my sons of courage to show themselves in public and would you bereave our house of its every glory? Do you offer to put so unseemly a blot upon the lustre and limpidity of my blood? Are you minded to commit so great an error and would you have me be the minister of mine own total ruin and like a shameless pander, lead mine own daughter to the stews? Think, sire, think that unto you it pertaineth, should others seek to injure me, to address yourself to my defence and to lend me every aid and favour; and if you offend against me, whither can I recur for succour? If the hand which should heal me is that which woundeth me, who shall give me solace and who shall apply medicine thereto. Wherefore, judge you yourself if I am aggrieved at you and if you give me just cause to complain and to send up piteous cries to heaven, putting aside carnal appetite awhile and looking right and reason in the face, for that other judge I seek none than your own unconquered and valiant soul. Moreover, I feel the utmost

wonderment at your case, bethinking me of the things said by you; nay, I marvel thereat more belike than would another, for that meseemeth I have, better than any other, known your usances from our boyhood unto these days and never, meseemed, were you addicted unto amorous pleasures, but were still occupied with arms and other exercises; wherefore it seemeth to me so rare and strange a chance that you should now have become the prisoner of love that I know not what to think thereof and if it pertained to me to reprove you thereof, I should say to you things which would put you beside yourself; but these I leave it to your own conscience to set before you. Bethink you, sire, of that which, whilst yet a lad, you did with Roger of Mortimer, who governed Queen Isabella, your mother and sister of Charles the Fair, King of France; and how, not content with the cruel death inflicted on him, you caused your said mother also die miserably in prison, albeit God knoweth if your suspicions of them were well founded. Pardon me, sire, if I bespeak you so boldly and consider your case better. Have you forgotten that you are yet in arms and involved in the utmost concern and anxieties by reason of the great preparations which the King of France maketh by land and by sea, to try an he may avail to render you the counterchange of the ever-memorable victory which God gave you over his troops, both by sea and in France? And now that you are daily to pass the seas and forestalling your enemy, to assure your dominions of Aquitaine, have you given yourself in prey to deceitful love, have you opened your bosom to its noxious flames and suffered them little by little to consume your bones and your marrow? Where, my lord, is the loftiness of your bright, subtle and ingenious understanding? Where is the courtesy, the magnanimity and the many other gifts,

which, joined to your valour, render you formidable and dreadful to your enemies, lovesome to your friends and venerable to your subjects? That, moreover, which you told me you purpose ultimately to do, an my daughter compleaseth you not, I can nowise allow to be an act worthy of a true and valiant king; nay, but I must frankly avouch it to be the baseness of a lewd and pusillanimous man and the fashion of the worst and cruellest of tyrants. Ah, sire, God put such a thought out of your head! For that, an you begin, for idle appetite of lust, to force the wives and daughters of your subjects, this island will be no more a kingdom, but will deserve to be called a den of thieves and assassins; for, where justice is not, what fair or good thing can be said to be? If you can, with blandishments, with promises and with gifts, persuade my daughter to comply with your desires, I may indeed complain of her, as of a young woman little continent and unmindful of her ancestors' honour; but of you I could say no otherwhat than that you have done as men commonly do, who seek to have as many women as they may at their pleasure, whilst she will abide with such shame as commonly resteth upon unchaste women. Nor can I believe that a woman should have such empery over you as you tell me Alice hath; nay, these are but words such as every lover useth to say, to show that he loveth fervently. But think a little if this be seemly; nay, it is e'en out of all seemliness and reason that she who should be a subject be a superior and that he obey who should command. Is this the constancy, sire, is this the fortitude, is this the strength of mind and the assurance for which the people of England look from you, that they may live with a mind at ease, trusting to have a valiant and magnanimous king? I misdoubt me sore the prudence, the justice, the liberality, the urbanity and courtesy, the

foresight to see and provide for future chances and the untiring and continual diligence, wherewithal, whenas we were in the land of Picardy, you governed your army and maintained it in such harmony that, albeit it consisted of various and divers peoples assembled, there was never the least discord therein, no longer exist in you ; no, nor that soldierly craft and subtlety which did you so much honour aforesaid and brought you so much profit. But meseemeth the worst of all is that you know your error and confess it with your own mouth and yet you seek not to amend it ; nay, you go seeking to cast a veil and a semblance of honesty over the sin and the default which are in you and cannot avail thereto. Marry, sire, I would lovingly remind you that you acquired exceeding great glory by overcoming King Philip at sea, routing and dispersing that great armament of his, which numbered four hundred sail, and laying siege, under his very eyes, to Tournay, that famous city, whose inhabitants were whilom holden in such esteem and were anciently called Nervii. Nor gat you less glory by conquering him at Cressy, near to Abbeville, where on the French side there died the King of Bohemia, come to Philip's succour, and many barons, whom it were longsome to recount, name by name ; and eke much honour accrued to you by the taking of Calais and by innumerable other emprises of you achieved. But I tell you, sire, that you will achieve a far greater and more glorious triumph by conquering yourself, for that this is the true victory and that which bringeth most honour. It little availed Alexander the Great to have conquered so many provinces and discomfited so many armies and after to suffer himself be overcome and subdued of his own passions ; nay, this made him much less than Philip his father, albeit the latter won not so many kingdoms as his son. Wherefore, my lord, do you, I

prithece, conquer this fond appetite and seek not by so dishonourable an action to lose that which you have so gloriously acquired nor to put so foul a stain upon the brightness of your glory. Think not that I say so much to you thereof because I am loath to execute that which I promised you, for that I fully intend to do it ; but, being grown much more jealous of your honour than you yourself are either of yours or of mine, I counsel you and remind you of that which meseemeth is to your honour and profit. Marry, if you reck not of yourself, who, in God's name, should reckon thereof? Who shall concern himself with your affairs, an you take not thought to them and to yourself? But, if you have understanding, as I know you have, you will bethink yourself that a brief, dishonourable and fleeting pleasure taken by force with a woman can afford you scant delight and may belike be the cause of infinite mischief. For myself and my sons I desire of you neither wealth nor rank nor other good, save that which my services and theirs rightfully deserve. Wherefore keep you your script and give it to others, who, so but they have monies and dignities, reckon not how they are come by. For my part, inasmuch as I may, I will never have aught cast up against me or against my children or descendants which may with reason make us blush and change countenance ; for you well know how some are scorned and pointed at with the finger who have, under past kings, waxed rich and great by the doing of dishonourable offices, though they were erst of mean condition and most ignoble. Bethink you, sire, that it is no great while since you yourself, being with the army against the Scots, rebuked one of these latter to his face, in that he had, being your father's pimp, been from a barber made an earl, and how you threatened him, an he changed not his fashions, to send him back to his ancient craft. With this,

sire, I will make an end of my long discourse, humbly craving you of pardon, if I have said aught that displeaseth you, and beseeching you receive all in such spirit as I have spoken; and now, with your leave, I will get me home to my daughter and will punctually do that which you require of me." Thereupon, awaiting no other reply from the king, he departed the chamber and went his ways, revolving many and various thoughts upon that which had passed.

His reasonings stung the king's sick and impassioned soul to the quick, so that he was well-nigh beside himself and knew not what to say, and indeed they pierced him the sharper inasmuch he was not so blind but that he saw the earl said sooth and had bespoken him as a loyal, affectionate and faithful servant. Accordingly he began very particularly to consider all that had passed between them and many of the things said touched him on such wise that he repented him sore of his rashness in requiring his mistress's father of means to compass his desire, himseeming withal his request was unseemly and dishonourable; wherefore he well-nigh determined to leave that his amorous enterprise and altogether to rid himself thereof. But, whenas he thought upon Alice's lovesome beauty and upon those her goodly fashions and manners, he changed his mind in a trice and said in himself, "Ah, woe is me! I should indeed be fond and foolish an I thought to be able to live and not love this woman. I feel but too surely that all my powers and all those of my realm, to boot, might not suffice me to leave her and put her forth of my heart. How can I pretend so lightly to loose myself from this indissoluble bond and do myself free from so tenacious and fervent a love? How shall this be anywise possible? Who is there can procure but that I shall eternally hold her for my

sovereign lady and mistress? Certes, methinketh, no one. Alice was born to be she unto whom I was still to abide subject and her alone to love and none other woman. If, then, I know that I could do no otherwhat, though I would, and that, an I could, I would not, what booteth it to cudgel my brains? I love Alice and shall still love her, betide thereof what will. The earl is her father and hath spoken as a father, and I ought not to have discovered myself to him. But what then? I am the king and meseemeth it is no great crime for me to love my vassal's daughter; I am not the first who hath done this, nor yet shall I be the last." On the other hand, as the fervour of his heated thought began to abate, there entered his brain some ray of reason, which made him see the ill and scandal which might ensue of that his love and in some measure took the edge off the keenness of his amorous intent; so that, torn by conflicting opinions, now full of hope and anon altogether bereft thereof, passing from one thought to another and him-seeming impossible even to quench his passion for the lady whom he so fervently loved, he ultimately determined to await that which the earl should do with his daughter; wherefore he came forth of the closet and albeit all heavy at heart and woeful and oppressed with grievous thoughts, he enforced himself withal to hide his inward sufferance under a blithe countenance.

Meanwhile the earl went straight to his lodging, pondering and repondering that which the king had imparted to him, and betook himself to his chamber; where, after he had debated many things in himself, knowing his daughter to be at home and resolved to speak with her at length, he let call her to him and she incontinent came thither without delay. Her father caused her seat herself overagainst him

and began on this wise to bespeak her, saying, "I am convinced, dearest daughter mine, that thou wilt marvel no little at that which I have presently to say to thee; nay, thou wilt the more marvel thereat and abide full of extreme wonderment inasmuch as it will with reason seem to thee that it nowise pertained unto me to do such an office with thee. But for that of two ills it behoveth still to choose the lesser, I doubt not but thou, being sage, even as I have known thee from thy childhood, wilt make that same election which I have myself made. As for me, daughter, from the time when meseemed I began to have some cognizance of good and evil, being yet a lad, to this present, I have still made more account of honour than of life, for that, in my judgment (such as it is), it is a far lesser evil to die innocent and unsullied than to live dishonourably and become the byword of the vulgar. Thou knowest what it is to be subject unto another's empery, whereas needs must one oftentimes do the contrary of that he hath in mind and do on a new habit, according to the nature of the times and the will of his masters. Now what I have to say to thee is that my lord the king let call me to him to-day and instantly besought and constrained me with very warm prayers to serve him in that which he should require and which (he said) was of vital import to him, proffering me all I might ask that was in his power. I, having been born the vassal and servant of this crown, freely pledged him my sincere faith that I would use mine every endeavour to execute all he should command me, and he, hearing my free promise, after many words, accompanied with sighs and tears, discovered to me that he is so sore enamoured of thee and of thy charms that he can nowise live without thy love. Now who, in God's name, could ever have conceived that the king would have bespoken me of such a matter?" There-

upon the earl recounted the whole story, word for word, of the discourse which had passed between the king and himself and added, "Thou seest, daughter, to what a pass my lavish and simple promises and the king's unbridled desires have brought me. I told him that it is in my power to entreat thee, but that enforce thee I cannot; wherefore I pray thee (and may the prayer avail a thousandfold!) that thou consent to complease the king our lord. Bethink thee, daughter mine, to make thy father a gift of thine unsullied honour and chastity. The thing shall be done on such wise that it will be kept hidden from all and it will, to boot, be the means of making thy brothers the first barons of this island. All this, daughter mine, I have been fain to tell thee, not to fail of my word to the king; but thou art sage and discreet and if thou ponder that which I have said to thee, I doubt not a jot but thou wilt make a choice worthy of thee." And with this he was silent.

The young lady, what while her father bespoke her, waxed on such wise red in the face for shame and was so enkindled with chaste indignation that whoso saw her had accounted her incomparably fairer and more charming than of wont. Her two fair eyes showed like two sparkling stars, flashing and darting their ardent rays; her cheeks resembled two incarnate roses, culled in April at that hour whenas the sun, lashing his coursers forth of the Ganges, beginneth little by little to dry the dewy grasses and to open all the flowers, shut for the night-damp; and her ivory neck, her marble shoulders and alabaster bosom, suffused with the modest vermeil of native and unsophisticated beauty, approved her such as the poets feign Venus to have appeared on Ida to the Trojan shepherd, between the other two goddesses, for that she then showed herself far fairer than of wont, so she might the lightlier overpass her companions in beauty and

grace. Now, when Alice perceived her father to have made an end of his speech, she softly unloosed her tongue and breaking her speech between orient pearls and precious rubies,¹ began on this wise to answer him, saying all disdainfully, "So sore do I marvel at you, father mine, hearing you say a thing which I never thought to hear from your lips, that, if every particle of my body were a tongue of steel and my voice adamantine and untiring, methinketh they would not suffice to express the least scantling of my wonderment. Nay, indeed, I have cause at once to marvel at and complain of you for ever and ever, seeing the little account you make of mine honour, for that, whatsoever you may command me as your daughter and servant, you should know withal and call to mind that you never yet saw act in me nor heard word from me which might embolden you to say aught to me other than honourable. But tell me, see you not that you invite me, nay, well-nigh exhort me to do a thing, the which had I the least thought of doing, I should deserve to be slaughtered of you without pity, an you were to me that honourable father you should be? Marry, father mine, what time the king was at Salisbury, I perceived that he made a show of being enamoured of me, and the like have I known in this city, inasmuch as he pursueth me all day long with amorous looks and hath sundry times essayed me with letters and messages, seeking to debauch me with the most lavish promises; but all hath availed him nothing, for that, whenassoever he bespoke me or sent me letters or messages, I have still avouched mine honour to be dearer to me than my life. To you I chose

¹ *La lingua dolcemente snodando e tra perle orientali e finissimi rubini le parole rompendo*, a typical example of Bandello's awkwardness in the use of the concetti-style of his day, in which his plain homely manner is about as much at home as a bear in a ballet.

not to say aught concerning this affair, and still less to my mother and my brothers, lest I should give you occasion of despite against our king, knowing, as I do, how many scandals have ensued from the like causes and how many cities and kingdoms have been ruined by reason thereof. But, praised be God, it needed not that I should fear to put you arms in hand, since I see you thus prompt and diligent in so dishonourable an office. I was silent, then, deeming silence the lesser evil, and eke restrained myself from showing aught, in the hope that the king, seeing my firm and incorruptible honesty, would desist from so ill begun an emprise and suffer me to live as beseemeth the like of me [and in accordance] with my chaste purpose. Wherefore, if of late you have seldom seen me leave the house and have noted how meanly I clothe myself, I have done this to none other end than to avoid, in so far as was possible to me, encountering with the king and to the intent, moreover, that he, seeing how humbly I was clad, might conclude my thoughts to be set upon otherwhat than love-matters. Since, however, he is obstinate and I am nowise minded voluntarily to compleas him in aught other than honest, I will, so he may not (which God forfend) do his will of me by force, ensue your counsel and of two evils elect the lesser, choosing rather to kill myself than anywise to suffer so foul a stain and reproach to be put upon mine honour and myself to be pointed at in the streets as the king's whore. I have heard say a thousand times (and you also have presently told it me) that honour should still be esteemed far above life; and certes life without honour is as a foul and infamous death. God forbid that I should ever become any man's harlot, whoever he may be, or that I should do aught in secret which, being after made publicly manifest, might cause me change colour! Marry, father mine,

what honour were yours, if I did aught other than honest, that, whenas you went through the city or to court, you should hear it said of the vulgar, whereassever you passed, 'Yonder is such a woman's father; yonder is he who hath waxen in rank and riches for having sold his daughter.' Think you belike so great a misdeed should abide hidden? Nay, though men for fear should not dare open their mouths, who might avail to hold their hands, so they should not write bills and libels¹ and scatter them about the streets and stick them up at every corner of the city? When the king, according to what I have heard tell, let behead his uncle, my lord of Kent, and (a little after) Roger Mortimer, and put his mother to death in prison, there were bills stuck up about the streets in censurement of him; and albeit he was sore enraged thereat and caused behead sundry, whom he suspected to be the authors thereof, there stinted not withal many who had a mind to missay of him from sowing abroad other writings in divers ways. Certes, then, of you and me would be said the foulest things in the world. But put it that the thing abode secret; know you not that all men (and especially princes) desire to-day one woman and to-morrow another, according as appetite taketh them? And let be the offence against God, which is e'en the first thing we should have before our eyes, an we would fain be rational creatures and not beasts, what know I, when the king shall be surfeited with me or when this his libidinous appetite shall have passed from him (and indeed such appetites use for the most part very lightly to cool and pass away in men in general, so soon as they have gotten their intent,) but he will esteem me that which you will have

¹ *Cedule e bolletini.*

made me, to wit, a common strumpet? Moreover, were I assured and certified that he should love me long and fervently, must I not bethink me that this commerce will some time or other have an end, forasmuch as there is nothing under the sphere of the moon but tendeth to be finished? So that, turn it how you will, I see nought of good therein; nay, I apprehend right well that I should abide the rest of my life fringed o' the face with otherwhat than pearls and jewels and should nevermore dare show myself in public. To that, again, which you tell me, that you have pledged the king your faith, I answer you that, in so doing, you very ill apprehended a father's authority over his children in such a case, they being not bounden to obey him in things which are displeasing to God; more by token that such dishonourable and incestuous promises are not valid, and of things ill promised it behoveth to break the plighted faith. I acknowledge that I am your daughter and bounden to obey you, whensoever you shall command me, but in things lawful and honourable. And I must also remind you (though you know it better than I) that you and I and all who were, are and shall be have, according to that which I have oftentimes heard affirmed from the church-pulpits of worthy and authoritative preachers, a Father and Lord, whom we are bounden to obey more than our fleshly fathers, and moreover that it is not lawful unto whatsoever person, be he who he will, to make laws or edicts in contradiction of the Divine laws and ordinances. Wherefore, you being in this most shameful thing, which you exhort me to do, altogether and most manifestly rebellious against the Divine authority, how will you have me obey you and should I not rather be to you a rebel and a mortal enemy? Bethink you, then, and if you will

have me hold you for my father and honour you as good fathers should be honoured, be never again so bold as to require me of such baseness neither bespeak me one sole word thereof; else, by Christ His Cross, I will, before all the world, render you such honour thereof as you deserve. But God forbid that it should ever come to this! Oh! how far better were it that you had promised and sworn to the king rather to cut my throat with your own hand than suffer me fall into so abominable a default! This had been more honourable to you and far eather to do, and certes the king and I had accounted and esteemed you far more of worth therefor; ay, and the world, understanding the cause of my death, had exalted you for ever to the skies with the sincerest praises. So that, to end these parleyings, which have perforce aroused my sore despite and whose remembrance will ever be to me a cause of the bitterest chagrin, this is my final and constant resolution, made with mature consideration, and do you hold it for true as the Evangel, that I am ready rather to let myself be slain and to suffer every penalty and what torment soever may be imagined than anywise to consent unto aught dishonourable; and if the king seek to take amorous disport of me by force, I will do on such wise that his power and that of all others shall be in vain, having ever in remembrance that a goodly death glorifieth all the past life."

The earl, by the discreet and magnanimous reply of his daughter, knew the valiance and greatness of her soul and inwardly gave her many praises therefor, blessing her and holding her of far more account than before, and himseeming he had spoken freelier and more at large than it beseeemed a father to bespeak his daughter, he offered not for the nonce to say otherwhat to her, but arose from his seat and

let her go about her occasions. Then, having taken counsel with himself and straitly considered how he should answer the king, he repaired to court and said to him, "Sire, not to fail of that which I promised you, I swear to you, by the fealty I owe God and you, that, as soon as I came home, I summoned Alice to my chamber and set forth to her your wishes, exhorting her to compleas you ; but she, after much debate holden, most steadfastly answered me that she was resolved rather to die than to do anything dishonourable ; nor might I avail to draw aught else from her. You know I told you that I might pray her, but not force her ; wherefore, having faithfully done that which was enjoined me of you and that which I bound myself to do, I will, with your good leave, go do certain occasions of mine at my castles." The king granted him leave to depart and abode all beside himself, revolving various things in his mind. The earl, accordingly, thinking, an it were possible, to rid himself of this business, without incurring the king's disfavour, departed the court and on the following day betook himself with his sons to his earldom, leaving his wife and daughter in London, with part of his household. His daughter he chose not to carry with him, lest he should despite the king farther and so likewise he might see that he left her at his discretion, being firmly convinced withal that he would use no manner of violence with her. Moreover, he put much trust in her virtue and magnanimity, doubting not but she would know so well to defend herself that she would come off with honour from that sore predicament.

As for the king, he no sooner heard that the earl had departed London and left Alice than he divined the true state of the case ; wherefore he fell into such despair of that his love that he was like to go mad. He passed night and day on like wise, without taking any jot of repose ; he ate little

or nothing, never laughed, but sighed away ; nay, whenasoever it was possible to him, he stole away from his company and shutting himself alone in his chamber, had no mind unto otherwhat than his lady's dire and cruel rigour, for thus did he style her pure and steadfast chastity. Living this life, he fell to giving audience by proxy,¹ the which it had been his former usance to afford to his subjects thrice a week in person and publicly. And certes one of the most laudable parts which any true prince can have is that he be prompt and ready to hear the complaints and petitions of his people and to learn that which is doing in his dominions ; nor should he trust over-absolutely in his ministers, for that they oftentimes commit many errors and very great injustices, and if the prince were solicitous to understand on what wise his state is governed and how the governors apply themselves to their office, these latter would govern much better and would refrain from doing aught that might be blamed. The king, then, fell into this error of giving audience well-nigh unto none. Journeying, jousting, tilting at the ring and hunting, things which were erst so acceptable to him, especially the chase, in which he had been wont to take so much delight, now pleased him no more ; nor did he any longer take pleasure in other sports.

He had on the Thames, the river on which London is situate, a very goodly garden, with a commodious and pleasant palace, which he had built there, so he might go thither for his diversion ; and for that, on the way from the court to this place, whether one went by land or by water, it behoved to pass overagainst Earl Richard's house, the king daily betook himself thither, now by the river and now through the street before that house where he knew that

¹ Lit. interpreter (*interprete*).

Alice abode, of his desire to see her whose love was still fast established in his heart. Withal, it seldom happened that she was to be seen ; for that, an she chanced to be at the windows giving upon the street or upon a balcony which overlooked the Thames, no sooner did she espy the king coming than she straightway hid herself indoors ; whereat he was beyond measure afflicted, and yet it rejoiced him to have seen the walls which harboured his proud and cruel mistress. But, for that it is the nature of ardent lovers that, the straitlier the sight of the beloved lady is denied them, the more do they yearn and long to see her, the more the king, who desired to look upon Alice more than to make himself master of France, found himself debarred therefrom, the more he strove to see her, essaying every means which seemed to him apt to that end. Accordingly, putting off all disguise, he not only fell to passing three or four times a day, or more or less, according as love urged him, before the house, but oftentimes applied to walk there ; so that his passion became speedily patent unto every one and that which was before known to none, he discovered unto all the folk. Wherefore, this his enamourment getting wind amongst great and small and all being possessed of the obduracy and cruelty of the lady, who well-nigh never suffered herself to be seen at the balconies or windows, she was generally blamed, one reproaching her with this and another with that, and all would fain have had her yield herself to the king's pleasure. It pleaseth most folk to go to others' entertainments and to take part in balls and concerts ; but none would willingly have such revels at home. On like wise, all would fain have their princes live merry and lead an amorous life, for that, when a prince is in love, it seemeth all his subjects abide in joy and merriment ; but it liketh none that his women be

wanton'd withal in his own house. Accordingly, all the English would fain have had the king obtain his intent and give himself a good time ; but none had cared to have him enamour'd of his own wife, daughter, sister or other woman of his family.

Now, the king persevering in leading so sorrowful and weariful a life and his hopes waxing daily less and less for Alice's unconquered and inexpugnable chastity, he fell into so dire a melancholy that he was liker to a wild beast of the woods than to a man. Wherefore not only the city of London, but all the island, which was by this made cognizant of that his love, abhorred and censured the lady's chaste purpose, the vulgar being still readier to blame good than evil. Moreover, there were some of the court who essayed her with letters and messages in favour of the king, part cajoling and part threatening ; others urgently bespoke her mother on his behalf, showing her the good which would ensue thereof, if Alice consented to do his pleasure, and on the contrary how much and how great the harm which would abide, as she persisted in such obduracy. And so one on this wise and another on that studied to induce the countess to pray her daughter do the king's pleasure and the daughter to lay aside her extreme rigour and cease to be so contrary unto such and so great a love. But Alice, for aught that was said or shown to her, nowise budged nor swerved from her purpose ; nay, misdoubting her the king might one day offer her violence, she made shift to procure a sharp and trenchant knife, which she carried at her girdle under her clothes, resolved, should force be offered her, to kill herself rather than be violated. Her mother abode meanwhile between two minds, for that, opening her ears to the lavish promises and proffers made her on the king's part, ambition assailed her, showing her that, if her daughter

became the king's mistress, she herself would be the first lady and baroness of the island; wherefore she sundry whiles entered into discourse with her daughter and studied, with certain fables of her fashion, to induce her to yield to the king's prayers, but still found her of one same tenor and firmer than the hardest and most immoveable rock, when beaten of the swollen and threatening waters of the sea. Brief, the king, understanding that all essays had been in vain and that, as he took not other means, he was farther out than ever in his reckoning, knew not whither to turn, himseeming not well to use violence, albeit he had oftentimes a mind to carry her off by main force. This his love was now grown so notorious and so patent unto all that it was spoken of no otherwhat at the court of London and he himself was come to such a pass that, with whomsoever he talked, he did nought but prate of his mistress's cruelty, beseeching every one to succour him with counsel and aid.

Here needs must I digress a little and say a few words which presently occur to me. If those courtiers, who spoke with the king, had been true men of court,¹ they had with all their might counselled him to desist from so fond and vain a love and in giving him so useful a counsel, they would at the same time have aided him. Courtiers of old were loyal and well-bred men, full of courtesy and endowed with every virtue, but those who nowadays call themselves by that name (I speak of the ill and not of the good) have nothing of the courtly, save that they live at court, and so but they make a braver show than others and ruffle it more sprucely in the matter of clothes, themseemeth they are the first men in the world. For, whereas the true and good courtiers

¹ *Uomini di corte*; see the definition of a courtier which follows.

of old delighted in martial exercises, in the practice of letters and of other accomplishments, spending all their time in courtesies, such as making peace between enemies, according those who were at variance and uniting the estranged, these do altogether the contrary and so but they play the *Miles Gloriosus*¹ with whoso can less than they, themsemeth they are very *Tamburlaines the Great*. Again, whereas true courtiers, by dint of practice, made themselves agile, skilful and doughty cavaliers, these of whom I speak reckon not of being, but of appearing with a goodly sword by their side, making more account of being said to avail much than to avail in good earnest. To be lettered they account well-nigh a shame and say that to study and wax pale over books is a matter for doctors, priests and friars; nevertheless, they are so brazen-faced and so foolhardy that, if they chance to be whereas it is debated, between men of lofty wit, of some curious matter of learning, as well human as divine, they (for that they would fain appear learned) are e'en the first, with their would-be wiseacre speech, presumptuously to offer to decide the whole; nay, they oftentimes say the greatest dunceries and the ineptest fustian ever was heard and would have us believe them upon the sole authority of their names, as they were *Aristotles* and *Platos*. Moreover, that which holdeth not in their ignorant brain, they will not hear of, setting it down as a thing impossible. They are courteous in words, but the effects thou wilt find altogether contrary to their speech, for they will freely promise thee to further thine interests with the prince and will do nought thereof, thine adversary having given them more than thou. Nor is he who pleadeth with

¹ The allusion is, of course, to the well-known comedy of *Plautus*.

thee¹ always more favoured than thou, inasmuch as, like as thou art deceived, even so doth the other also bytimes find himself befooled. It sufficeth these scurvy courtiers that the vulgar believe them to be in high credit with the prince and to draw monies from these and those. They will promise thee to bespeak the prince of thine affairs and will in thy presence whisper him in the ear of other matters ; giving thee to believe that they have spoken of thee ; and still they will sell thee a thousand fables. Such an one as these was Vetronius Turinus about the person of Alexander Severus, Emperor of Rome, whose iniquity, being discovered and approved more than true by the astuteness of the said Alexander, had such a chastisement as it merited, it being adjudged that he should be bounden to a great stake amiddleward the market-place, round about which was a slow fire kindled with vine-stalks and green twigs, so as to give out a dense and clinging smoke, which should slowly suffocate the wretched Turinus. What while the unfortunate abode in such torment, a sergeant of the court did nought but cry, "Turinus is put to death by means of smoke, because he hath sold smoke ;" and on this wise by smoke died the vain and notorious Turinus. Were it done thus in our time, courts would be in more esteem than they are, and not only would the selling of smoke be less practised, but courtiers would not be so apt to vend lies nor would become like unto dogs, biting and tearing one another ; for that, whenas they have the prince's ear, I warrant you they chant it finely, missaying of these and of those, who are maybe better than themselves ; but jealousy so benumbeth them that they cannot brook the sight of one who availeth more than they, lest

¹ *i.e.* thine opponent in a lawsuit.

he come into favour with the prince and they themselves fall in degree. Moreover, if perchance they see the prince to be deceived or in error anent whatsoever it may be, so but it touch them not, think not that they seek to undeceive him; nay, all follow their master's humour, betide thereof or good or ill. The cause of this is the pusillanimity of many men, who have not courage to tell the truth; but, if the prince say ay, they affirm it; and if he say nay, they sing the same tune, having no regard to that which they say, whether it be apt or unapt. Again, I will not speak of those kitchen-hawks, who betake themselves to court for no otherwhat than to sit at princes' rich and fat tables, being good for nought save to devour that which should pertain unto doughtier knights and men of more deserts than they. Would at the least they were styled buffoons and parasites and arrogated not to themselves the name of gentleman, thus doing scant honour unto civility and gentillesse! And albeit all those who assume to rank themselves under the standard of courtiership and yet live not as true courtiers should be blamed without stint and their converse shunned by all the good, nevertheless, meseemeth their lords deserve no less blame, who live on such wise that they will not have the truth told; nay, they account those [only] goodly and acceptable who never contradict them. These latter, moreover, it is that counsel and order everything with their open and false adulation; whence arose the byword, which some use to say, that "Who cannot flatter well, at court he may not dwell;" and yet there is no greater plague and no deadlier venom in a court than flattery. Withal it pleaseth me not that a courtier, how great soever he be, should anyway presume to reprehend the prince in public and chide him in the presence of others; nay, I affirm that a faithful servant, an he see his lord fall into error, should

admonish him with address and reverence, taking an opportune season, and on fair and gentle wise possess him of the truth. Ah, how far happier and more fortunate would princes be if they had who should frankly show them the evil which ensueth of many things which they do, the opinion which the people have of them, that which is murmured among these latter and the sorry governance of many ministers, who concern themselves with no otherwhat than to despoil the treasury and convert everything to their own use; things which did princes but understand, their dominions would be excellently governed! Marry, it is not to be doubted but that Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ knew all that the people said of Him, for that He knew everything and nothing thereof was nor will ever be hidden from Him; and yet He disclaimed not to question His disciples what men said of Him. And why, think you, did He this? Certes, for no otherwhat (His every action being our witness) than to instruct those who govern and the faithful in general that they should be diligent to learn what opinion is had of them, so they may persevere in good and desist from ill. And in truth princes have little need of otherwhat than upright, sincere and virtuous persons, who shall lovingly tell them the truth, without heat or hypocrisy. Such counsellors they should still keep about them and not do as many do, who think to make an orange-tree of a bramble, not to say a courser of an ass. But I have wandered overfar afield, for that, having from my boyhood till now frequented many courts, I know but too well how men use most whiles to do there.

You must know, then, that those courtiers who abode about King Edward were not of the good school, but were flatterers and men of little judgment and evil disposition; for that, without taking thought to the issue of things, they

all proclaimed a crusade against Earl Richard, his wife, sons and daughter, and whoso said most ill of them held himself of most account and thought to have spoken mighty sagely ; though belike, had the earl and his sons been there present, many of these latter had kept their tongues between their teeth and had (as is proverbially said) put their tails between their legs nor dared to open their mouths. Now the end of the matter was that the greater part of them exhorted the king to send to take Alice by force and carrying her to the palace, do his every desire of her in her despite, avouching that it ill beseemed a woman to make mock of her king and to show herself so contrary to his wishes. Moreover, there were some who had seen the fish and who offered to go in person to take her and hale her away by the hair, an she chose not to come with a good grace. The king, however, was loath as yet to use force and reserving violence for a last resource, thought first to try the mind of Alice's mother. Accordingly, he despatched his trusty chamberlain to her, fully instructed of all, and he, betaking himself forthright to the countess, said to her, after the due salutations, "The king our lord, my lady countess, saluteth you very lovingly and giveth you by me to understand that he hath done everything possible to him (and maybe more than beseemed him) to gain the love and favour of your daughter and to procure that all should ensue secretly, so the thing may not come into the mouths of the vulgar ; but, seeing that he cannot compass this his desire by aught that hath been done and finding no expedient that availeth him, except he use force, he sendeth presently to you, saying that, except you make due provision for your affairs and procure that he have his intent, you may be assured that he will, in your despite, publicly and with scant honour to you all, cause carry off your

daughter from your house by main force and that, whereas he was minded to befriend and advantage the earl and all his house, he will be to them a mortal enemy. He will let you know what he can do, when he is angered and is resolved, as he now is, to have his desire, himseeming it behoveth him not to languish all day long and suffer others to laugh and mock at him. And with this, my lady countess, I commend you to God."

The countess, hearing so unlooked-for and direful a speech, was overcome with such affright that already herseemed she saw her daughter dragged forth the house by the hair and torn limbneal before her eyes and heard her cry aloud for mercy; wherefore, all tearful and trembling, she urgently besought the chamberlain to commend her to the king's good grace and beseech him not to hasten thus furiously to dishonour the house of the earl, who had still been a most faithful servant to him, adding that she would speak with her daughter and persuade her to complease the the king. With this fair answer the chamberlain departed and the countess, weeping, repaired to Alice's chamber, where she found her awork with her maidens and dismissing the latter, seated herself by the side of her daughter, who had arisen to do her honour and receive her, full of marvel at her tears. Then, causing Alice sit, she told her that which she had heard from the king's chamberlain and bespoke her thus, weeping the while. "Dear my daughter," quoth she, "there was a time when, seeing thee the fairest among the fair ladies of this realm and virtuous over all others, I accounted myself a most happy mother and was fain to believe that honour and advantage would ensue to us of thy most rare gifts. But I was far mistaken and e'en misdoubt me sore, on the contrary, that thou wast born for our destruction and for the general ruin of our house

and that (which God forbend) thou wilt be the cause of the death of us all. Now, if thou wouldst but somewhat relax thy rigour and suffer thyself to be persuaded, all our grief and affliction would be turned to joy and gladness. Knowest thou not, daughter mine, that I have still tenderly loved thee over all my other children and rememberest not that which thou haddest of me privily, whenas the Earl of Salisbury (whom God have in glory) took thee to wife? Why, then, wilt thou not for the love of me unbend this thine obduracy and suffer thyself be governed of me, who am thy mother and a loving one? Bethink thee that the king is not only enamoured of thee, but, being well-nigh mad for thy dire cruelty, fareth very ill and goeth in sore peril of his life. Every one knoweth that thine obstinacy is the cause of his malady and of his discontent, so that we are odious to whosoever desireth the king's health; and all, except thou, desire it. Rememberest thou not that we have many a time, as we went to mass and abroad upon other occasions, heard exceeding evil spoken of us, both of great and small? 'Here,' quoth they, 'be the murtheresses of our king, here be the wicked women, who have never vouchsafed him the courtesy of a kind look or a pleasant word. Marry, they would e'en play the saint and at bottom, an one kept good watch, it would be found that some groom or bargeman enjoyed them. May thunder and lightning come from heaven and burn and consume them both!' These words I well know thou hast heard as well as I, and God only can tell the chagrin and affliction which I suffered and still suffer therefor. Wherefore, dearest daughter mine, with clasped hands I beseech thee show thyself somewhat compliant unto my prayers and persist not in willing our ruin and destruction. Thou must know that princes and kings, when they have besought one of

their lieges, whom they might e'en command, and see that their prayers avail not that which they should, have resort unto force and do all that pleaseth them, maugre who willesh not, to the scant pleasure of their subjects. Our king also will do the like; nay, he hath already menaced me withal; so that what might have been done with commodity and secrecy will be carried into effect on such wise that all the island and France, to boot, will know it, to our eternal ignominy, and of aught that the king may do, he will owe thee nor gree nor obligation, nay, we shall get nought but dishonour and scorn for our pains. Wherefore, daughter mine, I prithee, let it not come to this pass. Bethink thee a little how we abide here scant of servants about the house, since thy father and thy brothers departed hence, for that all fear the king's fury. Seest thou not that on thine account I am left well-nigh a widow? Thy father and thy brethren are gone forth of London, foreboding them of some great scandal and loath to see such a disgrace with their own eyes; the which will most certainly betide, to the shame and ruin of all of us, an thou change not thy fashions. How far better were it for us that the first day when I brought thee to life had been thy last or that I had died in childbed, rather than see myself at this hour in such affliction! Alack, why, when the Earl of Salisbury died at his coming forth of prison, why was it not thou that died in his stead? I beseech our Lord God to take me away from all these troubles and tribulations, since thou art resolved to persist in thine obduracy and reckest not of the ruin of all thy kin. Thinkest thou I perceive not that thou desirest my death, cruel and ungrateful daughter that thou art, scant of courtesy and lovingkindness towards thy parents? And certes I would presently die more than willingly, knowing it were a lesser pain to me to die than

to abide in these tormenting chagrins, which transpierce my heart without cease with the cruellest stings."

The afflicted lady could say no more, for that a sore swoon overcame her, straitening her heart with such exceeding pain and so oppressing her that she fell into Alice's lap, as she were more dead than alive. Indeed, she seemed altogether passed to the other world, so pale was she in the face, so stirless and so cold in every part of her body, that she had moved wild beasts and senseless stones to pity, much more her daughter, who, seeing her thus strangely and cruelly stricken, judged her or dead or nigh unto death and could not contain her tears. However, having somewhat loosed her afflicted mother's clothes, weeping bitterly the while, she called her piteously by name and strove, by dint of chafing her hands and shaking her, to recall her strayed vital spirits. Then, summoning her women, she let fetch hot cloths and water to sprinkle upon the countess's face, by means whereof she presently came to herself, gasping for breath, and said, "Alas, where am I?" whilst Alice kissed her and comforted her with all such caresses and endearments as she knew and might. Thereupon a second swoon overcame the countess, together with so dire a spasm of the heart that every sign of life was extinguished anew in her and needs must the others once more renew their endeavours to bring her back to herself, the which they ere long succeeded in doing.

At this piteous sight Alice could not so far contain herself but that, in her own despite, her entrails were all moved by filial pity and her adamantine hardness became in some measure softened and her rigour relaxed. Her unconquered soul and her steadfast will, against which so many other assaults and impediments had spent themselves in vain, could not stand out against her mother's piteous plight;

but, overcome with internal compassion, she bethought herself to deliver her folk from tribulation. Wherefore, the countess being now altogether recovered, though still she wept and sighed, Alice, having sent the waiting-women forth of the chamber, bespoke her mother on this wise, saying, "Dry your tears, mother mine, and afflict yourself no longer, but take heart and be comforted, for that I am disposed and ready to do that which you wish. God forbid it should ever be said that I was the occasion of bringing upon my folk such affliction as you seem to suffer ! I will not have my father and brothers expose themselves for me to the risk of any hurt ; for that it behoveth me with mine every endeavour to ensue their advantage and die, myself, that they may live. Behold, I am ready to go with you seek the king, so we two may order our affairs, without others' intervention ; for that we shall do it better than any else. Wherefore, come, lose no more time in weeping, but let us make a beginning of despatching that which is to do." The countess, hearing this unlooked-for and un hoped response, was filled with such joy that she could scarce believe her ears and like as a little before the sharpness of her affliction had put her beside herself, even so excess of joy was like to do the same ; wherefore, raising both her hands to heaven, she heartily thanked God that He had informed her daughter with such a resolve, as if God were a fosterer of adulteries and fornications. Oh, how fond oftentimes are wretched and ignorant mortals, laughing when they should weep and sorrowing whenas they should rejoice ! So did this good lady, who thought, in turning bawd to her daughter, to make a sacrifice to God. Wherefore, embracing Alice tenderly and weeping for joy, she kissed her again and again and could scarce loose her arms from her neck.

Now it was the month of June and the hour whenas

many use, for the heat which prevaieth, to sleep away the noontide. The countess let forthright make ready a boat, so they might go by water to the king's garden whereof I have already bespoken you and whither he had presently retired, to abide more alone and without noise ; whilst Alice repaired to her chamber and without anywise changing her dress, took her trenchant knife and made it fast to a girdle under her clothes ; then, falling on her knees before an image representing the Queen of Heaven, Mother of God and Refuge of the afflicted, holding in her arms the figure of her most precious little son, she most devoutly besought Her to render Her son propitious to her, so she might maintain her chaste purpose, and rising, returned, full of confidence and steadfastness, to her expectant mother, who had already let make everything ready. Now the garden of Earl Richard's house abutted upon the Thames and had a water-gate, where lay the barge. The countess and Alice accordingly descended thither with two waiting-women and all embarked in the barge, which was rowed by two serving-men, and faring down stream with the tide, the little vessel presently arrived at the marges of the royal garden, where the river-banks were dighted on such wise that one might ascend thither by one only gate and all the rest was shut on every side by high walls. The gate had a little before been opened by the chamberlain, the king's confidant, who had presently attended his lord to the river-bank, for that the latter, the better to think upon his love, had stolen away from his courtiers and abode not far off, seated upon odoriferous grasses, under the cool shade of the trees ; whilst he himself sat under the shrubs overagainst the open door, at once to enjoy the coolness of the soft breeze which breathed from the rippling waters and also for that none should enter in.

The ladies landed on the river-beach and bade the boatmen abide there with the barge; then, mounting sundry steps, they entered in at the gate. When the chamberlain saw them and recognized the countess, he marvelled amain, but yet more wonderment overcame him when he espied the fair Alice; wherefore, making towards them, he received them with reverence and saluting them, asked them what they did. Quoth the countess, "We come to do our reverence to the king, our lord and master, even as I told you a little agone I would endeavour to do." The chamberlain, hearing this, was filled with infinite allegresse and caused the two serving-men carry the boat into a little basin, where the royal barges lay; then, shutting the garden door, he betook himself [with the two ladies] to the place where the king sat, discoursing the while with the countess. Edward was at that moment, as we have said, seated in the shade, thinking upon Alice's cruelty and rigour and at the same time contemplating, with the eyes of the understanding, her lovesome beauty, which himseemed was e'en the goodliest and most miraculous he had ever seen or heard tell of, and was so absorbed in his thoughts, revolving a thousand things in his mind, that he took heed unto nought else; whilst the chamberlain brought the ladies so far forward that they saw the king, ere he heard or saw them. Then, turning to the fair Alice, "Yonder," quoth he, "mistress mine, is your king, who most assuredly thinketh upon no otherwhat than yourself, and now, an no one disturbed him, he would abide three or four hours thus alone and pensive, so sore is he netted in the toils of your love." The young lady, inflamed with virtuous despite, felt the blood course through all her veins colder than ice and waxed at the same time all afire, the which rendered her countenance fairer, rosier and more lovesome than of

wont ; then, they being now come less than five paces from the king, the trusty chamberlain, advancing, said to him, "Sire, here is the fair company, so much desired of you, come to do you reverence."

The king raised his head, as if awakened from deep sleep, and recognizing the countess, marvelled amain at her coming ; then, rising to his feet, "Welcome, my lady countess," said he ; "what good tidings bring you hither at this sultry season?" Whereupon she, after due obeisance made, replied, in a low and trembling voice, saying, "Here, my lord, is your much-desired Alice, who, repenting her of her coyness and obduracy, is come to do you such reverence as behoveth and to abide awhile with you, or more or less, as it shall please you." When he heard that Alice was with her mother and saw herself standing between her waiting-women, shamefast and somewhat despited, he was overcome with such joy that he could scarce contain himself, nor himseemed had he ever felt such pleasure ; wherefore, drawing near to the young lady, who still kept her fair eyes bent upon the earth, "Welcome," said he, "my life and my soul !" and kissing her, as best he might, in despite of her manifest unwillingness, he took her by the hand. Now who might tell the king's exceeding satisfaction and inexpressible joy and Alice's extreme discontent and infinite chagrin ? As for him, he thought himself in Paradise and aswim in a boundless sea of happiness, whilst herseemed she was in hell and immersed in its tormenting fires.

The king, seeing that the lady, all trembling and shamefast, had drawn away her hand nor greeted him with a single word, thought that she abode thus coy for the presence of her mother and the others ; wherefore, taking the countess by the hand and bidding her cause the women

follow, he took his way towards his lodging and so brought them all by a privy way into the royal chamber; for that the garden and the palace were on such wise situate that the king might by privy paths descend to the stream and return to his chamber, unseen of any, save those whom he carried with him. Then, they being all in the chamber, the king said to the countess, "Madam, with your good leave, the Lady Alice and I will enter this closet to converse together;" and accordingly taking the young lady by the hand, he very courteously invited her to enter with him. Alice entered, all shamefast, but with a lion's heart, and the king, following her, made the door fast with the bolt. No sooner had he done this than Alice, so he might not do her violence, fell on her knees before him and with a firm voice and an undaunted spirit said to him, "Sire, a strange instinct¹ hath brought me before you, whereas I thought never to come on this wise; but, being minded to rid myself of the annoy of your letters and messages and to content my kinsfolk, who, debauched by you, exhort me all day long to complease you (whereas they ought rather to strangle me) and being inwardly resolved of that which I purpose to do with myself, here am I ready to obey your commandments; but, ere I put myself at your absolute disposition and suffer you take of me that delight whereof you have shown you so desirous, I would fain certify myself by experience if your love for me is so fervent as you avouch by the many letters you have written to me and as you have sundry whiles sent to me

¹ Bandello here uses *istinto* in a sense which is not clear. I know no other English equivalent of the word than "instinct," which does not seem to fit the context.

to say. And if it be as you will have me believe, you will grant me a slight favour, which will cost you nothing and will afford me the greatest content I may ever hope to have. However, in case that which I shall require of you may belike seem to you grievous and hard to put in execution, I would fain know from you if you will do it or not, else hope not that I am ever like, what while I have breath in my body, to do aught to complease you. Remember you, sire, of that which you said to me aforetime at Salisbury and that which you have since given me to understand in writing and by word of mouth, to wit, that, did you but know how to do me a pleasure, I could not command of you so much as should forthright be put of you in execution. Now I command you not, (for that I may nowise presume to do,) nay, but very humbly I pray and beseech you that you will vouchsafe me your word and your faith to do that which I shall ask of you, remembering you that a king's word should not lie nor be in vain."

The king, who, what while she spoke, had kept his eyes fixed upon her lovely face and to whom she seemed beyond compare fairer and more charming than he had ever seen her, hearing himself so urgently entreated of that mouth, from which he so ardently desired an amorous kiss, would have promised her, not a little favour alone, but his whole kingdom; wherefore, calling God and all the saints of paradise to witness of that which he was about to say and promise her, he replied to her in these terms, saying, "My only lady and mistress, of me infinitely and above all created things beloved, since you, of your grace, have deigned to come hither to our house and ask me to do you a favour, ere I accomplish my will of you, I am ready to complease you and I swear to you by the sacred chrisim which I have

on my head¹ and by the love which I bear you (for a more solemn pledge I cannot give you) that all you shall require of me I will do without excusement, so but you command me not to leave loving you or to cease from being to you (as I am and for ever shall be) a loyal and faithful servant; for that such a thing, though I should promise it you and affirm it with thousands and thousands of oaths, I might never anywise observe; nay, if a man might live without a soul, then might I not love you and everything impossible might be ere I could leave loving you. Ask, then, boldly that which pleaseth you, for that I and all my kingdom are at your disposition; and if ever I think not to fulfil to you that which you shall ask of me, it being in my power or in that of any man in my kingdom, I devoutly pray God that He may never give me any contentment of Edward, Prince of Wales, my first-born, nor of my other sons nor of aught that I desire."

The fair Alice, though invited thereto, would not arise, but, kneeling as she was, modestly took the king's hand and said to him, "And I, sire, kissing your royal hand, return you thanks without end for this favour that you do me and abide infinitely beholden to you; wherefore, trusting, as behoveth me, in your royal word, I will ask of you the boon which I crave as my very life." The king, who was in very deed touched with true passion and who loved Alice more than the apple of his eye, anew most solemnly swore to her that he would royally and without any fraud or deceit do all she should ask; whereupon she pulled out the trenchant knife, which had a blade more than two

¹ Lit. "the baptism" (*il battesimo che ho in capo*), but the evident reference is to the Holy Unction that forms the most important part of the ceremony of coronation.

handsbreadths long, and shedding burning tears, which furrowed her fair and rosy cheeks, said piteously to the king, who abode all full of stupor and wonderment, "Sire, the boon which I crave of you and which you have bounden yourself to grant me is this ; to wit, with all my heart I pray you and urgently beseech you not to seek to bereave me of mine honour, but rather with your sword to take from me this frail and fleeting life, so that, like as I have hitherto lived blamelessly as became my condition, even so I may die honourably and worthily of myself. So but you will grant me this favour that you will rather kill me than dishonour me, I pray our Lord God still to keep you happy and give you the perfect accomplishment of your every desire ; else, I vow to God and with my whole heart I certify you that, an you fulfil not your promise to me, I will slay myself with this trenchant knife, nor, what while I have breath, will I ever suffer myself to be violated by force. Think, sire, that this which you seek of me, you may without any difficulty obtain from a thousand other most beautiful women, who will gladly compleas you, whereas I am steadfastly resolved to lose life rather than honour and repute. And what will be your pleasure, an you take of me by force that which you feign to desire, knowing as you will that you have my body only in bail and not my soul nor my will, the which will still offer you resistance, nay, will have you in hate, what little while I shall live, and will unceasingly cry to God for vengeance upon you? But God of His goodness forbid that you should do me violence ! Think, sire, think that your libidinous delight will pass away like snow before the wind, leaving you an undying remorse for the heinous outrage done upon me and a biting worm at heart, which will never cease to fret and torment you. Moreover, the

abominable shame which you will do me and the ignominious stain which you will cast upon the limpidity of my honour, together with my untimely death, which will ensue thereof, will bring eternal blame and perpetual infamy upon your name. Nor must you think that the report of this misdeed will be confined within the boundaries of England and the neighbouring islands; nay, but, passing the ocean, it will proclaim aloud throughout all Europe, nay, throughout the universe, the disloyalty and cruelty of so great a prince as you are, and in the future ages, your dishonour will go waxing with those who shall come after us, holding you infamously alive in the mouth of the people. This your pleasure will occupy scarce an atom of time, whereas the infamy [of your deed] will be proclaimed in every age and every inhabited place; nor will you alone be blamed, but your descendants will abide sullied withal. Will you have it said that I, born of a most noble and generous race, of ancient and stainless lineage, whose fathers, forefathers and kinsfolk have so many and many a time shed their blood for the crown of England, have been of you deforced and strumpeted? Have you forgotten how many you have punished, who were of one accord adulterers?¹ Bethink you of my husband, who was so faithful and so loyal to you and who died in your service; certes, dead as he is, he will cry to God for justice against you. Is this the guerdon which you would give him and the recompense which, an he were alive, he might expect for his labours? But, to come to the conclusion, do you now, my lord, one of two things; or fulfil to me that unto which you have bounden yourself by oath and trothplight or spare to rob me of that which, when you shall have stolen it from me,

¹ Referring to Edward's treatment of his mother and her paramour.

you may never, with all your might and all your treasures, avail to restore to me. Whichever of these two things you do, I shall abide as well satisfied with you as can be told. How think you, sire? At what do you look? Either keep me your promise or draw your sword and slay me. Here is my throat, here is my breast; why tarry you?"

So saying, she undauntedly proffered her fair and snowy throat and her marble bosom to the king and softly prayed him kill her. He abode beside himself, stricken immovable by so sad and rueful a spectacle; whereupon she, whose piteous looks and gestures might have availed to melt a mount of iron with compassion, having made an end of speaking, let herself fall at the king's feet, like a penitent Magdalen before Christ, never withal loosing the knife, and bathing them with hot tears, awaited, with an assured and unconquered mind, or the desired response from him or death. The king abode awhile irresolute, without saying aught, revolving various things in himself and torn by a thousand conflicting thoughts, whilst Alice still prayed him do one of the two things. Finally, considering the constancy, the steadfastness and the valiance of his mistress, whom he loved more than himself, and convinced that there were very few to be found of such worth and that she was deserving of all honour and reverence, he put out his hand to her with a heavy sigh and said to her tenderly, "Rise up, lady mine, and have no fear lest I should anywise seek of you aught save that which pleaseth you. God forbend that I should slay her whom I love as mine own soul, nay, far more; inasmuch as I would strangle, as a mortal enemy, whoso should anywise molest, not to say seek to slay her. Arise, for God's sake, my lady, arise. Let this trenchant and (to my seeming) truly fortunate knife remain in your

hands, as a manifest witness to God and men of your noble and unconquered chastity, whose modest aspect, earthly and lascivious passion, unable to brook, hath fled from me, full of shame and despite, and given place to sincere and true love. If in the past I have availed to conquer mine enemies, I will presently show that I know how to conquer myself, overcoming and curbing my unseemly lusts, and to do with myself and my appetites that which I will. That which I am presently resolved to do and shortly to carry into effect, you shall, with God's aid, speedily see, to your (as I am fain to believe) supreme contentment and belike no less wonderment, as also to mine own inexpressible satisfaction. Nor for this present do I seek otherwhat of you than a chaste kiss, in earnest of that which all the world will see with wonderment and will doubtless praise."

Therewithal, having kissed Alice with great pleasure, he opened the chamber-door and admitted the countess, the chamberlain and the waiting-women, who, seeing Alice in tears, with the naked knife in her hand, abode all full of marvel and amazement, unknowing what was to do. As soon as they were entered, the king bade the chamberlain assemble in the chamber all the courtiers and gentlemen in the palace, the which was very speedily done; and amongst those who came thither was the Bishop of York, a man of great parts and singular learning, together with the admiral of the sea and the king's chief secretary. These three and no more the king would have enter the closet with the chamberlain, there being many barons and lords in the chamber without. The bishop and the others abode full of the utmost amazement, seeing the countess with her daughter, whose tears were yet undried and who still by the king's commandment held the knife in her hand, and unable anywise to conceive the meaning of so extraordinary a

spectacle, awaited the issue in silence and suspense of mind. The door of the closet was now shut and those who abode in the chamber waited to hear to what end they had been summoned. The king had at the first thought to do in the presence of all that which he after did, but changing his mind, would have no other witnesses than those of the closet. To these latter, therefore, he punctually recounted the whole story of his love and that which had presently befallen him with Alice; then, after he had infinitely extolled her divine honesty and constant mind and the invincible steadfastness of her chaste and never enough to be commended purpose and exalted her with praise above all modest women that had ever been, he turned to her with a blithe visage and said urbanely to her, "Madam Alice, an it please you take me to your lawful husband, here am I ready to espouse you to my true and lawful wife. In this case nor you nor I need counsel nor advisement of the importance of the matter; for that you, having already been married, know by experience what manner chain and bond it is to a woman to have a husband, and I know what a burthen it is to have a wife at one's side, whenas the lady is fashious. But, be that as it may, an you will have me, I will e'en have you."

The young lady, full of infinite content and joyful amazement, could not utter a word, whilst the countess, hearing such unhoped and glorious news, was all agog with rapture and was like to answer for her daughter and say Ay; when the king once more addressed the same words to Alice, who, seeing that he spoke in earnest, reverently inclined herself to him and modestly replied that she was his servant and that, albeit she knew it behoved her not to hope or presume to have a king to husband, nevertheless, an he would have it so, she was ready to obey. Whereupon "And you, my

lord of York," quoth the king, "do you say the accustomed words which are used in espousals." The prelate accordingly put the wonted questions to them and both saying Ay, the king drew from his finger a costly ring, wherewith he espoused his beloved Alice; then, kissing her amorously, he said to her, "Madam, you are now Queen of England and I assign you to dower thirty thousand angels of yearly provision and this coffer here, full of gold and jewels, whereof this that I give you is the key. Moreover, the duchy of Lancaster being lapsed to the crown, I give it to you and will that it be freely yours to dispose of and that you may give and sell it at your pleasure." And turning to the secretary, he bade him draw up a most ample decree of these donations. Then, commanding that the espousals should not be divulged without his leave and causing those who were with him withdraw into the privy passage, he abode alone with the queen and consummated his marriage with her, culling with inexpressible pleasure somewhat of the fruit of his long and fervent love; after which he went down with her into the privy way, where the bishop and the others were, and thence, without being seen of any, they joyously escorted the new queen to her barge. The king abode with his people, whilst the ladies returned home, the fair queen praising and thanking God, who had vouchsafed her so glad an ending to her troubles and so splendid a recompense; and so the mother, who had carried her daughter to the king, to make her a harlot, brought her home, a queen.

Ten days thereafterward, the king, having ordered everything, despatched his trusty chamberlain, with letters from himself, from the countess and from the queen, to the earl his father-in-law, bidding him and his sons to the nuptials. The earl, hearing such good and unhopd

news, made much of the chamberlain and gave him many goodly gifts; then, with him and his sons, he repaired forthright to London, glad and rejoicing beyond measure. The greetings between the father and his daughter the queen and between the brothers and their sister were exceeding warm and repeated again and again; nor might they take their fill of rejoicing together. The earl was especially rejoiced, seeing the opinion which he had of his daughter's greatness of mind approved to the honour and exaltation of his house, and blessed the hour of her birth; moreover, he caused her tell him again and again the whole history of that which had passed between herself and the king; wherefore the countess could not forbear from blushing, whenas she heard recount her exhortations to her daughter to compleas the king and how she it was who had taken upon herself to carry her thither. Algates, she adduced divers arguments in her defence, alleging that she had gone very unwillingly, but that the fear of seeing her husband and sons and all her house ruined constrained her of two ills to choose the lesser; and so they contended merrily among themselves. But, above all, the new queen most devoutly thanked God that He had had regard to her chaste intent and had of His infinite goodness upraised her to so sublime and royal an altitude. Meanwhile, Earl Richard went with his sons to do honour to the king, who received them with all worship and courtesy, honouring the earl as his father and his sons as his proper brethren, and took counsel at length with the former of the fashion to be observed in bringing the queen to the palace and crowning her. Then, due preparation being made for the nuptials, the king let publish the new marriage and summoned all the dukes, marquesses, earls and barons of the

realm and other his vassals to be present in London at the calends of July for the nuptials and coronation of the queen. Meanwhile he repaired privily to the earl's house and there abode an hour or two of the day in joyance with his dearest wife.

On the morning of the appointed day, the king betook himself with a most worshipful company to the house of the earl his father-in-law, where he found the joyful Alice clad as a queen and the mansion sumptuously arrayed, and thence they went to church, she being attended by many ladies and lords, to hear mass ; which ended, the king publicly re-espoused his wife. Thereafterward she was with the utmost pomp and splendour crowned Queen of England in the great place, having a very rich crown on her head, and thence they presently returned to the royal castle, to dine. The banquet was goodly and sumptuous and such as beseemed unto such a king, and Edward kept open court a whole month long, with exceeding great triumphs and entertainments, holding such festival as if the daughter of a king or an emperor had been the bride. The queen in a little became in such favour with the people and barons that all supremely commended the king for that he had made a good choice of a wife, whilst he also waxed daily more content and it seemed his love for her still redoubled. He willed that the knife wherewith she had armed herself should still be borne naked before her by an esquire, whereassoever she went in public and whenassoever she ate, in testimony of her unconquered chastity. Moreover, he wrought so that the earl his father-in-law became ere long the richest and most worshipful baron of the island, and all his brothers-in-law he provided with dignities and revenues, on such wise that they avouched themselves for ever content. Thus, then, was the fair and sage Alice

exalted to high estate, becoming queen, and in truth she was worthy to be celebrated without end. Nor doth the magnanimous and illustrious king deserve less commendation, for that, in doing as he did, he approved himself a true king and no tyrant; and certes, in this that he did with Alice, he is worthy of every goodly praise, inasmuch as his glorious victory over himself rendered him his subjects loving and most obedient and afforded others an example of well-doing, teaching all that thus are immortal fames acquired. Nay, I for my part believe and am firmly persuaded that no less glory should be awarded him for that he knew so well to regulate his disorderly appetites and to overcome his amorous passions than for the many and famous victories which he achieved by force of arms.¹

¹ It need hardly be remarked that this story is a complete perversion of history. Edward III. never married again after the death of his queen, Philippa of Hainault, and Bandello appears to have confounded him with his son, Edward the Black Prince, who in 1371 married Joanna, formerly the wife of William de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, and also perhaps with his successor, Edward IV., who married Elizabeth Woodville under circumstances much resembling those of the present story. The attribution to the heroine of the name of Alice may be ascribed to a confused recollection of the story of Edward III.'s amours with Alice Perrers or Ferrers, one of his deceased queen's ladies of the bedchamber, a woman of easy virtue, who became and remained his mistress till his death, and the description of her as Countess of Salisbury to the old fable of the origin of the order of the Garter, in which the king figures as picking up a garter dropped by a lady of that name. *Cf.* Dumas' novel "La Comtesse de Salisbury."

Bandello

to the magnificent Messer Francesco Babaschiero.

Like as it is commonly said that all the psalms end in glory, so also may we say that well-nigh all parleyings between people of gentle breeding resolve themselves in the end into talk of love, as of the sweet condiment and solacement of all melancholy humours. And who is there findeth himself absorbed in such noyous thoughts or so shaken and battered of the blasts of contrary fortune but that, hearing tell of amorous chances, as they befall diversely, he openeth his ears and giveth heed unto whoso speaketh, to the end that he may learn how to govern himself upon occasion or note that which it behoveth him eschew, an he find himself in a like predicament? Certes, methinketh it is of the utmost advantage to a man to hear others' discoursements, so but the listener avail to separate the good from the ill, even as one sifteth wheat from tares. You must know, then, that a company, as well of men as of ladies, being lately come hither to Montebrano, to visit Madam Fregosa, my patroness, there came the news of the untimely death of the Count Gian Aloisio Fiesco,¹ who was last month drowned at sea. According to that which

¹ The hero of the celebrated conspiracy, famous through Schiller's tragedy, to deliver Genoa from the rule of Andrea Doria and consequent dependence upon the Spanish crown. He was accidentally drowned in the moment of success, whilst passing from one galley to another, on the night of the 2nd January, 1547.

was said of him, he had not yet overpast five-and-twenty years of age and was a young man of a very high spirit, exceeding eloquent and sound of judgment beyond his years, thanks to his proficiency in good letters and to the teaching of the learned and virtuous Messer Paolo Pansa; and it was the general opinion that, had he not died at that juncture, he had made himself absolute master of Genoa. Thereupon it was variously reasoned of his case, according to the various opinions and sentiments of the speakers; nevertheless there was none present, whether of our own countrymen or of the French, but marvellously commended him, recounting his many rare gifts and virtues and extolling the greatness of his soul, in that he had at so youthful an age of his own proper motion so masterly conceived and ordered the measures apt and necessary to make himself master of his native place, an emprise never essayed of his many ancestors, wise, warlike and puissant as they were. Now there was in our company Cataldo of Rimini, who had long sojourned in Genoa and the neighbouring parts and had been familiarly acquainted with the count; and he, after he had told us some particulars of the latter, finally related an adventure befallen in your own native place of Chiavari, so that all our discourse ended in love-matters. And for that one of your Ravaschieri family hath a part in the story, I, having written it down, thought that it justly pertained unto you; wherefore I have dedicated it to your name, so you may see that I am mindful of the endearments and kindnesses received by me at your hands, as well at Carcassonne as also at the abbey of Caones in Languedoc,¹ what time you were governor thereof. You shall hear, then, that which he of Rimini recounted. Fare you well.

¹ *Quere* Cannes in Provence?

The Thirtieth Story.

THE RASH PRESUMPTION OF A LOVER AND HIS DEATH, BROUGHT ABOUT BY HIS OWN PRECIPITATION AND HEEDLESSNESS.

You, sirs, have justly commended Count Gian Aloisio Fiesco, for that he was in truth a young man who deserved it; yet methinketh the most part of you are moved to praise him by the loud resounding report of him and of his virtues and singular gifts which is presently in all men's mouths. But, had you known him as I have and had familiar converse with him in divers affairs, methinketh this whole day would not suffice you to expound his due praises, the which an I offered to enter upon telling, it were an easy thing to me to begin, but meknoweth not how I should do to make an end thereof. Wherefore I will say nothing of his breeding, apt unto every greatest emprise nor of how, whilst yet a lad, he began to insinuate himself unto the thoughts of the Genoese and to implant in all men's hearts an infinite expectation of himself; I will be silent of the prudence, mature beyond his age, which he used in making the people of Genoa friendly to him and in cultivating the good will of his peers, so that the populace loved and revered him and the nobility honoured him and all had him in consideration. I will pass over the credit and repute which he had with the countryfolk of the Riviera di Levante and of the mountains bordering upon the Parmegian and the Placentine.¹ I will not recall how he was adored as a God of his vassals, to whom he never failed of justice

¹ *i.e.* the territories of Parma and Piacenza.

in the least particular and whom he succoured in their occasions, and had in the utmost respect of whoso marched with him in jurisdiction;¹ nor will I tell how he loved his brothers as himself and would have them honoured like himself and much more, nor how benevolent, how familiar, how easy and how succourable he showed himself to his friends and how sternly he avenged injuries and affronts; wherein he was very dissimilar from Julius Cæsar, who was used to forget nothing save offences suffered. And for that in this particular the story which I am about to tell you will show you what manner of man he was, I will pass over in silence many other his parts and will go on to bespeak you of his last emprise. I am not presently minded to debate an it be good or bad to usurp the liberties of one's fatherland, choosing not to oppose myself unto those who blame the usurper thereof nor to Julius Cæsar, who, usurping the Republic, begat the Roman Empire and oftentimes cited the verses of Euripides, to the effect that, if there be a case in which it behoveth to violate right, it is when one doth it for the sake of acquiring dominion. There be some, withal, who say that he usurped not the fatherland, but was made perpetual dictator by the laws and the people and that he closed not the tribunals nor shed the blood of the citizens, nay, that he forgave many his enemies. But, to return to Count Gian Aloisio, I say that, an we consider the emprise which he achieved and the time at which he did it, we cannot but account him a young man of very great courage and worthy to be praised, for that it is much to have sought to put hand to great things. Now he applied himself to this undertaking, at a time when the Emperor Charles

¹ *i.e.* his neighbours, the seigniors of adjoining fiefs.

is in arms and in the heyday of his victories in Germany and lord and master of well-nigh all Italy, except only that corner possessed by the Venetians. Marry, he¹ hath in his power the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily and the duchy of Milan; Mantua looketh him in the face and obeyeth his every sign; and as for Ferrara, what can it do otherwise than be to him a helper? More by token that he is said to have humbled the pride of Saxony and clipped the wings of the most part of the German princes, drawing to himself part of the Free Towns and sowing discord among the Switzers. You will tell me maybe that the pope might do him hindrance; but I see not that His Holiness armeth himself nor know I what confederates he hath and the Church of itself can offer him no resistance, it being presently a time when spiritual arms (to such a pass are we come) are little or not at all feared. That a stripling, then, should at such a time have sought to take the dominion of his fatherland, it being in the emperor's dependence, argueth a truly Cæsarean soul; and had he not fallen into the sea, he had doubtless, as the saying is, put the beak to the goose,² having already made himself master of the galleys and occupied two gates of the city. Consider a little the capacity of his mind, which, without (as far as I know) imparting it to any, hath so long masticated³ and finally digested³ so grave and difficult an enterprise. Is it not known that, on the evening of the night when he made his attempt, he in part discovered his purpose to his guests and that, the learned and worthy Paolo Pansa, who had reared him and his father from childhood, asking him what he had in mind to do and

¹ *i.e.* the Emperor.

² *i.e.* made an end of the matter.

³ Sic (*masticata e digesta*).

avouching himself greatly surprised that he should not have discovered the matter to him, he answered him, saying, "An I thought my shirt knew the conceits of my heart, I would burn it," the which had been long before said of Cato? Is it not known, moreover, that he commanded that no annoy should be offered to Messer Andrea Doria what while he lived, saying that from him, as his testamentary guardian, he had received many kindnesses? Again, it is known that he discovered not to Count Girolamo, his brother, his intent to seek to make himself master of Genoa, but told him only that he sought to avenge himself of an enemy of his and bade him go towards Banchi and there wait till he should send to tell him what he would have him do. But it is an established thing that in this our mortal life a man is rarely (whether he will not or know not or cannot) altogether good or altogether bad. An he sought to make himself master of his native land, it behoved him remove all obstacles which might hinder him of his purpose or make the emprise difficult to him; but he could not be entirely perfect. Algames, that which he did showeth the valour and magnanimity of his heart, and if such great parts and gifts as his would be praised in an old man, far more should they be admired and celebrated in a stripling. One only thing, to my judgment, was lacking in him, to wit, that he was no diviner and provided not for the emprise remaining in his brother's hands in the case [which befell] of his death in the hour of victory; but he was a man and not a God, and one man is worth a thousand and a thousand are not worth one. Now I have suffered myself be carried away, I know not how, into discourse of this peerless youth, and it had well-nigh escaped my mind what I promised to tell you.

You must know, then, that Count Sinibaldo Fiesco,

(beside his legitimate sons, Count Gian Aloisio and his brothers,) had by a fair gentlewoman of Genoa, his mistress, a son called Cornelio and a daughter named Claudia, a fair and graceful damsel, well bred and very engaging. She was given in marriage, whilst yet very young, to Simone Ravaschiero, son of Messer Manfredi, a rich man and one of the first of Chiavari. Manfredi gladly made this alliance, to have the count's interest against Count Agostino Lando, with whom he was at law concerning the jurisdiction of a castlewick on the borders of the Placentine, and the bride was accordingly brought to Chiavari, where the nuptials were held on such wise as sorted with the bridegroom's quality and her own. She, being accustomed to the honest freedom and sprightly fashion of converse which married women and marriageable damsels use in Genoa, lived very blithely and entreated all with an affable and pleasant familiarity. Of her and her fair fashions and sprightly manners, Giovanni Battista dalla Torre, a man of great wealth and consideration in Chiavari, became sore enamoured and seeing her fair and blithe, began to follow her whithersoever she went; and for that he saw her every day and talked with her very often, he studied with fair words to make his love manifest to her. Claudia, who was nowise dull, but very alert and quick-witted, jested and sported with him, when he bespoke her of love, but never answered him to the purpose and passed from that talk to another, often giving him the flout. Nevertheless, the young man, who sought otherwhat than jests and talk and would fain have wrestled with her abed, still applied himself to tell her his case and openly to discover to her the torment in which he lived, using such words as young men in love are wont to say to their mistresses; but the poor lover wearied himself in vain, for that she was not disposed to do him

any favour other than honest ; wherefore he abode sore disconsolate.

The thing standing thus and his desire waxing daily, the more hope failed in him of compassing that his love and possessing the beloved object, he continued to pay court to her and strove, whenassoever he had commodity thereof, to make her aware of the pains which he said he suffered, albeit she still replied to him on one wise, to wit, that she had no mind to such toys. The infatuated lover, seeing his affairs go from bad to worse and finding no manner of solace for his cruel sufferings, abode sore ill-content and knew not what to do. To withdraw from the emprise and to leave loving her of whom he was so fervently enamoured was impossible to him, albeit he applied himself thereto again and again and studied to quench the devouring flames which without cease miserably consumed him. Bytimes he resolved not to go whereas she was nor bespeak her and to eschew her sight as most he might ; but no sooner did he set eyes on her again than the smouldering fire incontinent blazed up anew and he doated more than ever on the sprightly lady's charms, himseeming eke dead hope revived. What while he abode between these alternatives, still going from ill to worse, it chanced that one day the lady's husband took boat and went off to Genoa upon certain business of his ; the which Gian Battista hearing, he took counsel with himself and resolved, betide thereof what would, to essay by practice to obtain that which he might not avail to have by other means ; to which end he bethought himself to enter the lady's house in secret and hide himself under her bed. He tarried not to give effect to his rash purpose ; but, knowing how the house stood, he entered and hid himself, without being seen of any, under the bed where he knew the lady slept.

Evening come and bedtime, Madam Claudia entered the chamber with her maid and began to undo herself; then, mounting upon the bed and being about to put off her shift,—whether it was her usance or whether some instinct foreboded her of the case,—she bade the maid look that there was none in the chamber. The maid, accordingly, bent down to look under the bed and seeing one hidden there, gave a loud scream and said, all trembling, “Alack, madam, alack, there is a man hidden under your bed!” Claudia, who had already put off her shift, wrapped it about her and without otherwise clothing herself, sprang out of bed and ran, shrieking, to the mezzanine chamber where Messer Manfredi her father-in-law slept and there took refuge, all affrighted and trembling. Great was the clamour which arose in the house and she and her maid abode a good while, ere either could take breath to speak, so dismayed were they. The hapless lover, who had fondly flattered himself he might avail without difficulty to lie with the lady, hearing her flee, was all aghast and opening a window that overlooked a courtyard and was very high, leapt down therefrom to the ground. He was grievously hurt and crippled in the fall and abode so wried and broken that he could not move; but a neighbour, running to the noise, let carry him away; else he had been slain.

The case was next morning bruited abroad everywhere and Messer Manfredi straightway by letters and messengers advised his son thereof post haste. Simone, who was at Genoa, read his father’s letter to Count Aloisio, in the presence of many; at which foul news the count was sore despited and could not brook in quiet that such an affront should be put upon his sister. However, like a wise man, he dissembled his anger and falling a-smiling, said, as if

in jest, "Such are the extravagant pranks of these mad young lovers, who take no thought to the issues of things. Gian Battista should have come to an accord with my sister and not have gone thither thus rashly and foolhardily; however, he hath done both sin and penance at once, for Messer Manfredi writeth that, if he live, he will abide all crippled and palsied of his person, but it is thought he will die." On this wise, then, concealing the despite he felt against Gian Battista, he gave those present to believe that he recked not of the matter; but at heart he was all full of rancour and malice and was inwardly resolved that such presumption should not remain unpunished. And indeed great and marvellous are the effects which are oftentimes seen to ensue of a generous spirit, whenas it feeleth itself unjustly affronted, for that the irascible appetite spurreth it on such wise and so inflameth it to avenge itself that it never resteth nor is anywise appeased till it knoweth itself avenged, though it see manifest ruin before its eyes; whereof patent examples are daily to be seen.

Accordingly, the count, being inwardly resolved upon vengeance, let call Cornelio his brother and Simone his brother-in-law to him and said to them, "Thou hast heard, Cornelio, the affront which yonder crackbrain, Gian Battista dalla Torre, hath put upon our sister Claudia, and methinketh that,—an thou have the spirit which, thou being born of most noble parents, reason willeth thou shouldest have,—thou wilt take order with Simone to wreak such vengeance on the offender as the case requireth. I will give you two pinnaces well equipped, with five-and-twenty stout and well-armed men. Do you embark therein and betake you to Chiavari this coming night two or three hours before daybreak. Enter the place and make no delay about

the matter, but go straight to yonder accursed fellow's house and hew him in pieces, as he deserveth. This done, do you retire to our castles and I will provide for the rest. But, an you do not that which I enjoin you, do thou, Cornelio, never more come before me nor call thyself my brother; else be assured that, the first time thou darest draw near me, I will slay thee with mine own hand; and thou, Simone, an thou do it not, I will no longer have thee to brother-in-law or kinsman, still less to friend."

The two brothers-in-law promised to do that which he bade them; and accordingly, being furnished with that which they needed, they set out for Chiavari, the weather being fair, and arrived there at the appointed hour. Landing, they repaired to the city-gate and three of them, going forward, called to the warders, who opened the wicket to them. No sooner were they entered than they let down the drawbridge; whereupon all the others sprang up and threatening the warders with death, an they cried out, committed them to the care of certain of their number. These latter they left in charge of the gate, whilst Cornelio, Simone and the rest went straight to their enemy's house and casting down the door with their engines, made their way to the chamber where the hapless Gian Battista lay, all broken and mangled, and slew him without mercy, hewing him limb from limb and cutting his body into a thousand pieces. Then, without being hindered of any, they all issued safely out of Chiavari and retired, according to the count's order, to the latter's castles, for fear of the Genoese seigniory. Such, then, was the end of the rash and foolhardy presumption of the luckless lover, who chose, without the lady's accord or that of her maid, to try his luck and found it such as you have heard; and in effect whoso reckoneth without his host must reckon twice over.

Bandello

to the venerable Monsignor Stefano Coniolo.

Since you returned to your house in Monferrato and Madam Fregosa, our common patroness, betook herself to the court of the Most Christian King, I have still abidden in my wonted lodging of Bassens. There, these latter days, I heard how Priest Antonio Bartolommeo, called Cascabella, was imprisoned at the Bishopry, for that, having, some thirty years ago, taken a wife and had children by her, he after let himself be ordained a priest and not only abode with his said wife, but entertained a concubine, to boot. The wife liveth, the legitimate son liveth and the concubine liveth, together with sundry children, begotten of Cascabella. The thing seemed to me passing strange nor indeed had I ever heard of such a case in the Western Church. But the wretch will now have to render an account of his doings. There chanced to be certain of our officials there and various things being discoursed of Cascabella and of his many vices and malignant nature, Messer Barnabo Casanuova told a story of another priest, which befell no great while ago; wherefore, having written it, I have chosen to send it to you and to make you a gift thereof, so it may be read under your name, in witness of our mutual goodwill and of many kindnesses received from you. Fare you well.

The One-and-Thirtieth Story.

A WOMAN, HAVING LONG BEEN A PRIEST'S CONCUBINE AND BEING DISMISSED BY HIM, HANGETH HERSELF IN HIS PROPER CHAMBER.

It is beyond doubt, sirs, that there daily betide cases after the nature of that whereof you have spoken; and I might tell you of many thereof, for that proceedings are daily instituted anent the like matters. This betideth for that men, being still sharply assailed of carnal appetites, lightly suffer themselves to be overcome thereby and go following them whithersoever they carry them. And albeit all our passions are the occasion of great ills, it seemeth withal that those of love and hate cause men make the most extravagant errors; for that a man, drawn by some false semblant, whether of vengeance or of carnal pleasure, thrusteth his head into the snare and goeth so far forward that he hath much ado to withdraw. But, speaking of the priest Cascabella, who hath so recklessly fallen into so great an error, I have compassion upon him, for that we are all frail and subject to the venereal passion. I marvel indeed, that, at his age, he showeth so little contrition. His wife is disposed to do that which shall be ordered her; but the concubine showeth scant wish to do well and meknoweth not an she will seek to imitate Priest Elia's baggage, of whom I shall presently tell you. I chanced to be present at the examination and saw that he still goeth seeking to excuse

his error, which admitteth of no excuse; the which showeth the wound to be festered, his long and sorry usance of lewd living having become to him as it were a second nature, so that the habit formed in an ill hour hath more power to keep him in the sin than exhortations to draw him to amendment; for habits of whatsoever kind may very uneath be done away. Wherefore whoso desireth to live a Christian life, an bytimes he fall into sin, should incontinent seek to raise himself up again nor suffer himself wax hardened in vice; else he becometh a slave of sin and in a manner loseth his liberty, submitting himself to the misgovernance of his corrupt and vicious nature, which is still prone to go from bad to worse. Now I, thinking to tell of Priest Elia's concubine, am become in a manner a preacher, as if there were any in this honourable company who stand in need of my exhortations.

I must tell you, then, that, in the days of our late bishop of good and pious memory, Monsignor Antonio dalla Rovere, of the family of the Seigniors of Vinuovo, hard by Turin, a man of chastened life and learning, Priest Elia da Alto Pino was vicar of the parish of Ameto, a village under the jurisdiction of Monseigneur de Caumont and in the diocese of Agen. The said priest entertained a concubine, with whom he had lived more than nine years, still keeping her in the house, as she had been his wife; the which gave rise to scandal in the village and the neighbouring parishes and there was much murmuring thereat. But he recked nothing of others' talk and persisted in his lewdness, nay, went from bad to worse. Now it was the usance of my lord bishop, whenas he found any priest who sinned in secret, to endeavour with the utmost urbanity, modesty and clemency to bring him back to well-doing and draw him forth of his

sin, correcting him with love and charity and secret penances, whereas the fault was hidden. Those, however, whose sins were public and scandalous, he chastised with more severity and punished with public penances or with imprisonment, still withal using more mercy than justice, like a good shepherd as he was, and seeking rather the life of the delinquent than his death. Accordingly, understanding Priest Elia's lewd and filthy life, he let cite him before his tribunal; whereupon he came and being examined of the bishop, freely confessed his most grievous error and with humility and tears besought pardon thereof.

My lord, hearing his free confession and seeing the sorrow which he showed for his sin, he promising to send away the woman and never more to fall into a like default, but thenceforward to lead a godly life, had compassion on him and having left him awhile in prison, mortifying him with fasts and other penances, let once more bring him before himself; whereupon Elia prostrated himself at his feet and besought him anew of pardon and mercy. "Priest Elia," quoth the bishop, "thine enormous, libidinous and grievous sin and the long time thou hast abidden therein, together with the scandal given to thy parishioners and to many others, deserved that I should let perpetually mortify thee in a darksome prison upon a pittance of bread and water; but, forasmuch as thou showest contrition for thy wickedness and promisest me to do thyself free from this fetid quagmire of lust and never more to return thereto and as moreover I have good witness that thou governest the souls committed to thy care aright and that, albeit thou thyself livest ill, thou nevertheless exhortest the people to live catholically and rebukest vice, I have chosen to use more clemency with thee than severity and justice. Look, then, that thou approve thyself grateful for the in-

dulgence I show thee and let me hear no more complaints of thee ; else will I use thee after such a fashion that thou wilt repent thee of having fallen into my hands. Go with God's blessing and mine and sin no more."

Now the priest had already let dismiss his concubine his house, giving her to understand that he would have no more to do with her ; and accordingly, returning home, he applied to change his life and manners, living as a good priest should and showing that he heartily repented him. The concubine, who would fain have returned to live under the shadow of the belfry, essayed by many ways to draw the priest to the old lure, but might nowise avail thereto ; wherefore at last the poor wretch, seeing that she wearied herself in vain and that he would no more of her converse, waxed desperate and resolved (whether it was that she was enamoured of him or whatever was the cause thereof) to live no longer. Accordingly, hearing one day that Elia was gone to carry the most precious and holy body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to a countryman, who was at the point of death, at some distance from the parish church, the despairful woman repaired to his house, every part of which she knew, having dwelt there nine years, and entering, broke open his chamber with her tools, then hanged herself with the well-rope to a beam there and broke her neck. The priest presently returned and entering his chamber with sundry folk, saw that frightful spectacle. There flocked many thither and great was the clamour ; and the wretched woman was, as she deserved, drawn to the asses' burial-place. I myself went thither by the bishop's commandment and saw her hanging, and there were those who testified to having seen her hasten towards the priest's house, what while he was gone with the Corpus Domini.

Bandello

to the most illustrious and excellent lady Madame Anne de Polignac, Countess de la Rochefoucauld et de Sancerre, Princess de Marsillac et Dame de Montagnac, Raudan, Onzen, Verteuil, etc.

How many and how various, most noble and accomplished madam, are the chances which daily betide in matters of love, may lightly be conceived of whoso considereth how diverse are the understandings and how various the appetites and desires of men and women. And albeit Love oftentimes exerciseth its divine and invisible might on such wise that the lover is seen to be transformed into the beloved and altogether to change his nature and usances, becoming other than that which he was before, nevertheless it for the most part worketh on one wise in a choleric and on another in a melancholy man. Again, we see the behaviour of the phlegmatic to be different from that of the sanguine, whenas love harboureth in their breasts, for that with all its forces and all its flaming fires it may not avail so throughly to burn, smelt and transmute a man and refine him in its fiery and unslackening furnaces, but the soul mostwhiles goeth ensuing the passions of the body by its natural way. Wherefore it is no marvel if we see one lover abide still in joy and allegresse and albeit his mistress flouteth him

and showeth herself still froward to him, rejecting his service, he for all that despaireth not, but taketh in good part whatsoever he seeth and suffereth, for that such is his native disposition. Another, on the contrary, caressed though he be by his terrestrial idol and like to touch the skies with his finger for excess of contentment, abideth yet without cease all aflood with amorous sufferance and midmost a sea of allegresse, weepeth and sigheth, still fulfilled with freezing fears. A third now laugheth, now weepeth, now abideth in suspense between the two and changeth humour, governing and ordering himself by the countenance of her whom he loveth, like as the sailor steereth his course through tempest and foul weather by the gelid sign of the Pole-star. Thus variously, then, is pleasure tasted, is dolour scorned and life shunned and abhorred, nay, oftentimes death is desired and sought both of happy and unhappy lovers, according to the different temperaments of these and of those. But of these differences among men and of these various fashions of love I purpose not to discourse at this present, for that another place were needful point by point to discuss them and ampler space to treat of them as a whole, and I set myself, worshipful madam, to write to you at this present, not to debate of philosophical questions but to acquaint you with the strange chances that daily betide in the ample domain of love. Now, like as lovers differ in appetites, in nature, in fashions, in habits (which in the long run become a second nature) and actions, even so we still see that which is done to be like unto the doer. Education and our freewill may indeed change the bodily passions; but I speak of that which is usual and customary. Wherefore, if in this our age men delighted to write down all the notable and excellent things which happen day by day and which are

worthy of eternal remembrance, they would not only do a worthy work, but would eke be the means of instructing those who read their writings, and the time, which is now mostly wasted in useless talk and squandered upon idle toys not worth a straw, would be spent in reading things delectable and profitable; nay, oftentimes, many occasions of evil would be eschewed. Nor need they fear that subjects and matter for writing would ever fail them, for that Love's domain being immeasurably great and he having servants innumerable and of various dispositions, divers effects must of necessity arise every day, the which, an they be goodly and honourable, invite mankind to just and virtuous dealings and being known sorry and blameworthy, are a sure bridle to curb disorderly appetites and hinder us from precipitating ourselves headlong into the like errors. Now there was, in Lombardy, some years ago, a very honourable and gallant company assembled by way of disport in a most delightful garden and seated, under a trellis of sweet-scented jessamine, upon the fresh and cool green grass, enamelled with a thousand kinds of lovesome and fragrant flowers, and there being sundry courteous and accomplished ladies and divers well-bred and virtuous youths present, the talk, after many discoursements, turned upon love, that sweetest and most dulcet condiment of all converse which is toward in merry companies. Messer Luca Valenzano, a man of good letters, blithe and mirthful in company and a most dulcet speaker, being there present, was prayed, if he had aught in hand that might afford them delectation, to be pleased to tell it, so the time might agreeably be whiled away; whereupon he, being courteous and a great servant of the ladies, related a piteous case, which had befallen no great while before. The company showed themselves mightily pleased with Valenzano's story

and all of one accord urged me to commit it to writing and add it to the number of my other novels; wherefore I set it down point by point as the thing was told. Now, going about to gather my scattered novels together, that I might put the last touch to them, I found this and inasmuch as it will be viewed and read with art,¹ meseemed prudent not to send it forth without a tutelary shield, such as I use to give to all the others, so it may avail to cover itself against yonder critical railers and cruel carpers at other folk's productions. Marry, indeed, an things were ruled by my counsel, it and its fellows would on no account let themselves be seen of those who have (as they would have us believe) so subdued and overcome their passions and mortified their appetites that they vaingloriously boast themselves of doing nothing save by the governance of reason and that the senses have no part in their actions. Such as these I would have my novels shun as the pest and eschew them to the utmost of their power, inasmuch as they would but be scorned and I without end blamed and holden foolish. But they shall go only into the hands of those men and those women who, being of flesh and blood, think no shame to suffer themselves to be bytimes overcome of amorous passions, so but they rule them as temperately they may. With these I will have them sojourn day and night and never more depart from them; but, in case it should e'en behove them whiles show themselves elsewhere, it is my will that this one appear armed with your noble and illustrious name, whose reverence and repute shall safeguard it against yonder superstitious hypocrites; for that, in truth, that generous name

¹ Sic (*con l'arte*, i. e. with critical eyes?). Var. *con l'altre*, with the rest.

of yours bringeth with it such assurance that it may, under such a safeguard, let itself be seen in any place, without being bitten. Nor, madam, should it appear strange to you, who are so great a lady, that I, a man of mean estate and little account, presume so far as to avail myself of you, albeit I have paid my respects to you but once, to wit, what time you came to Bassens in company of the most illustrious and reverend prelate, Cardinal d'Armagnac, a man never to be named without a prefix of honour, and lodged in the house of the most illustrious princess, Madam Costanza Rangona e Fregosa, my mistress and patroness; for that there, where I live to myself and the Muses, you then gave us such a taste of your urbanity, of your gentillesse and your courtesy that I may reasonably venture, without fear of blame or rebuke, to avail myself in this of your illustrious and famous name. But what should I fear, having in remembrance the lavish and most courteous proffers, which, without desert on my part, you deigned, at your departing hence, so graciously to make me and in such engaging terms? Moreover, the renown of your high worth, which resoundeth everywhere, and that which is daily most worshipfully reported of your conversation and usances by those who know you familiarly, give me to believe that, albeit indeed I have never done you any service, this my novel will not be unwelcome to you; nay, I am firmly persuaded that you will hold it dear. I have eke been moved to give it to you and to inscribe it unto your name for that, in these six years that I have still abidden in this realm of France, I have seen no lady who delighteth more than you in the Italian tongue or who hearkeneth more gladly to that which is written therein, as you fully showed, whenas you listened with

close attention to the reading of sundry of my novels and (what seemed to me no small thing) approved the soundness of your judgment by your judicious selection of the good and the best. This novel, then, I send you and dedicate to your name, assured that it will of your favour be graciously accepted by you. May our Lord God prosper all your thoughts! Fare you well.

The Two-and-Thirtieth Story.

AN ACCOMPLISHED YOUNG LADY, SEEING
HERSELF ABANDONED BY HER LOVER,
THINKETH TO POISON HERSELF, BUT
DRINKETH A HARMLESS WATER.

Since, by virtue of those fair eyes which were my true and fostering sun upon earth, I began to feel the flames of love and by most manifest experience to prove their divine puissance, I have still holden it for certain that there is nothing in the world, how grievous, hard and perilous soever it be, but appeareth, to a lofty, generous and noble spirit, forged and smelted in the purging fires of love, safe, light and eath to put in execution. I for my part have ever accounted all for nought, save the compleasing in every-thing of the person truly beloved, especially whenas love is known to be in part requited, though it should behove me be lavish, nay, prodigal, not only of the goods of fortune, but of my very life. Wherefore, an bytimes we see men or women, for excess of love or bereavement of the beloved

object, run greedily to precipices, to waters, to fire, to steel, to the cord and to poison and become their own murderers, meseemeth the case is worthier of pity and compassion than of blame and chastisement and that we should all take warning by these woeful chances to govern ourselves sagely and not to give so loose a rein to our unruly appetites but that we may in case of need avail to resume the governance thereof and steer our course by the compass of sovereign reason. As for those who stick not to avouch that they do with love as liketh them and can love and unlove at will, methinketh (and my opinion, an it be debated, is not without a foundation of reason) they have never loved nor known by experience what it is to open the breast to the amorous flames, for that, albeit it is possible for a lover in course of time to do himself loose from the toils of love, whereas he seeth his service to be unaccepted, Time being the devourer of all created things, I am convinced that there are few true lovers so fortunate that they can of a sudden, though they should see themselves scorned and flouted of their mistresses, quench the amorous flames and from slaves become freemen. If any there be so master of his passions and sentiments that he can dispose them as he will to his every wish, of such an one I say that he is no man of this world; nay, I affirm that he holdeth far more of the celestial and the divine than of the terrestrial and the human. Now, albeit I might by many examples approve the justness of this mine opinion, I will proceed to the narration of a case newly betided in a city of Lombardy and worthy to be published by a more worshipful and learned mouth than mine own, the which is scarce sufficient to tell what happened, far less to adorn with a sprightly and agreeable style the particulars of this most noble passage, which deserveth indeed to be celebrated and commended by the

fluent and dulcet eloquence of our divine Boccaccio. Here shall you see how a virtuous damsel chose rather to lose her life than the love of her lord and how she quaffed the death-dealing poison with a blither and gladsomer countenance and a wholer and more steadfast heart than that wherewith the pilgrim, whenas, wearied with a long and toilsome journey and parched with the heat of the mid-day sun, he arriveth under some shade, drinketh the sweet and limpid waters of a cool and clear fountain, as it wellet forth of the live rock and fareth with a grateful murmur through the green grass. This she did for that she loved beyond measure and made more account of her lover than of her own life. Here shall you see, to boot, what mischief may be done by the ignorant malignity and the shallow brain of a worthless woman, who, thinking of no otherwhat than of her own advantage and of the satisfaction of her unchaste desires, showed that she recked neither of honour nor of shame nor of harm that might ensue thereof. But, for that to blame women was never pleasing to me and that of respect for her, who, whilst she lived, was my pole-star, I desire to have all women in honour and to see them honoured of all, I will keep you no longer in suspense, but will come incontinent to the fact.

You must know, then, that in a city of Lombardy there was (and yet is) a gentleman by name Camillo, whom some of you know and who is honourably endowed with the gifts of nature and of fortune and very fortunate in love, being by nature much inclined to the service of the ladies. He made the acquaintance of a very well favoured and accomplished damsel, called Cinzia, who excelled in touching the harpsichord, and had not long companied with her ere their familiar converse turned to that kind of love which Calandrino would have had his comrade Bruno tell to

Niccolosa.¹ Camillo, to boot, much delighted in music, so that, being daily in the damsel's house, (the which was frequented by many gentlemen and especially by the virtuosos of the city, for that there was still playing and singing there and some pleasant discourse toward) he became ardently enamoured of her and she of him. This being the case, there was no great difficulty in giving accomplishment to their loves and having amorous joy of each other; for that the young lady, being in no fear of her husband, who had for some misdeed or other been banished the city, left every other love and gave herself altogether into Camillo's power. Moreover, this she did with the cognizance of her father and mother, and they, constrained by poverty and making great profit by Camillo, who largely provided for the household occasions in well-nigh everything, freely suffered him to be with their daughter whensoever it pleased him, whether by day or by night. She, as I have already said, recked of none other than Camillo, but loved him most fervently and was altogether dependent upon his will; wherefore, no great while after, she conceived with child and was presently brought to bed of a fair daughter.

Camillo on his part loved his accomplished Cinzia very dearly and let her want for nothing; wherefore, so she should not be at pains to suckle the child and might with greater commodity attend to her pleasures and sing and play whensoever it pleased her, he provided her with a very young nurse, a malapert minx, who was none too chary of conceiving and bearing children without a husband nor might ever abide without one or two husbandmen to water her little hortyard; and for that she was well favoured, it chanced eke that some gentleman or other had bytimes

¹ See my "Decameron of Boccaccio," Day IX. Story V.

to do with her. There came ever many to hear Cinzia play and Camillo oftentimes brought folk thither, especially if any gentleman or nobleman came to the city, so that the house was seldom empty. Goody nurse accordingly proceeded to clap up with one and another of the servants of those gentlemen who frequented the house and bytimes to prove which of them weighed the most and was the doughtiest ; whereof Cinzia chid her sharply, for no other-what than of her fear lest she should mar her milk for her daughter, and the nurse, loath to lose her pasture, cast about for a device whereby she might get a hold upon her mistress and dispose of her at her will, for that she had her share of cunning and thought by this means to compass her intent. Accordingly, she sounded sundry youths and strove to persuade them to require Cinzia of love, assuring them that the emprise was easy of achievement and that she would aid them in all that was possible to her ; so that, if Cinzia hearkened to other than Camillo, she might still hold her under her thumb and have her pliable to her wishes nor fear any more to be chidden or reproved of her, an she chose to give herself amorous pleasure with whoso most liked her. However, for all she essayed many young men, she might not accomplish the affair, for that none dared expose himself to the hazard of such an emprise, as well of respect for Camillo as for fear lest he should cause give them buffets good measure.

The nurse, seeing that this fashion succeeded not to her, was nowise moved from her purpose, but bethought herself to try another way, as I will tell you out of hand, an you will hearken patiently unto me. Camillo had a friend and more than a brother to him, called Giulio, a young man of very noble family in that city and beyond measure high minded and magnanimous, with whom he shared his every

secret ; nay, to such a pitch was this brotherly privacy waxen between them and so strait was the bond of their friendship that they might verily be said to be one soul in two bodies ; wherefore they mostwhiles abode together and it seemed as if one might not live without the other. Giulio marvellously delighted in music and sang his part mighty surely by the book,¹ forby that he also played on sundry instruments ; by reason whereof he was grown so familiar with Cinzia that, were Camillo there or not, he abode day and night without scruple to converse with her and loved her as his proper sister, of his regard for his friend. The nurse, seeing this loving familiarity between them, determined to do her utmost endeavour so Giulio should take amorous pleasure with Cinzia ; wherefore, finding him standing one noontday at a window, ogling, by way of jest and diversion, a damsel, who abode overagainst Cinzia's lodging, she drew near to him and said, laughingly, "Alack, Giulio, I know not what to think of thine affairs ; thou goest fretting thy jesses² for yonder damsel, who is such a jade that thou wilt never get the wind of her, more by token that her brother is exceeding jealous of her and keepeth her under the straitest guard and an aunt of hers never letteth her out of her sight, as thou mayst plainly see. How much better were it that thou shouldst leave yonder minx and turn thy thoughts elsewhere and love her who loveth thee and supremely desireth to compleas thee, once she seeth that thou art minded to love her, as she loveth thee." "And who," asked Giulio, "is this of whom thou bespeakest me? Who is she?" "Marry," answered the nurse, "it is Cinzia, my mistress,

¹ *A libro*, i.e. "from notes," as opposed to "by ear."

² One of the metaphors taken from the practice of falconry which so frequently occur in mediæval and Renaissance literature.

who loveth thee far more than herself, as I can most certainly testify, seeing she hath more than once confessed as much to me. But she dareth not tell it thee, lest thou shouldst discover it to Camillo." Whereupon Giulio, who had set his thoughts otherwhere and whiles, for pastime, feigned to be enamoured of the girl in question, but had died rather than do such a wrong to his Camillo, said to her, "I do not believe that Cinzia hath in her head such thoughts of me, knowing as she doth that I love her as a sister, nor would the regard I have for Camillo suffer me hear of such an emprise. She may rest assured that I would do every-thing possible for the love of her, so but it involved not wrongdoing to Camillo." Then, thinking to certify himself of Cinzia's mind and advertise Camillo of the whole, "Harkye, nurse," added he, "I believe not in these fables for many reasons; but, if Cinzia will have aught of me, let her tell it to me, seeing she hath commodity to speak with me at her pleasure whensoever she will, without any intermediary."

The treacherous nurse, who had hatched the whole plot of her own fancy, without Cinzia's knowledge, cared not for the nonce to press the matter farther, finding the soil over-hard; but taking her opportunity, what while Cinzia was undoing herself to go to bed, one night when Camillo was not to be there, she entered, after some indifferent talk, upon discourse of matters amorous and passing from one subject to another, said to her, "I know for certain, mistress mine, that Giulio loveth you more than his soul and greatly desireth that you should command him, for that you will still find him most ready to serve you." "Good," replied Cinzia; "I know full well that he loveth me heartily and I also love him, as he were my brother." "Nay," quoth the other, "I mean it not on that wise;

I tell you he loveth you with that love which men generally bear women, to lie with them. So Giulio loveth you to enjoy this your person and hath already bespoken me somewhat thereof, beseeching me intercede with you and induce you to complease him, whenassoever there shall be commodity thereof; the which may still be, an you will." "That I believe not," answered Cinzia, "for I deem not Giulio so disloyal and so hare-brained that he would seek to do Camillo so enormous an affront." "I know nothing of all these niceties," rejoined the knavish nurse; "I only know well that he is enamoured of you and would fain lie with you, so he may at his pleasure hold you in his arms and enjoy you; and you are a simpleton, an you do it not. And what a devil think you to do? He is young and loveth you heartily and will still abide your servant. Why, then, should you not complease him? Are you so fond and simple as to think that Camillo contenteth himself with you alone and with your kisses and amorous embracements? Faith, an you think that, you are mistaken. I know full well the life he leadeth and that which he doth. He goeth every day seeking new amours and is never satisfied with one or two; and whenas he hath not whither to go to his liking or some appointed rendezvous faileth him, he cometh hither. Are you so blind that you are unaware thereof? Egad, the blind themselves would perceive it. An he keep not his faith to you, why should you keep it to him? Remember that, these days past, he could not deny to you that he had lain the night with such a woman. Whoso cheateth me once, I repay him in kind and double measure, an I may; and an I may not, I keep it in mind till the opportunity offer to avenge myself. But I must warn you that opportunities left are lost.

Give yourself a good time, whilst you are young, and wait not for old age, for you know well what is used to be proverbially said, to wit, 'Tidbits for wenches young, Gags for the old wife's tongue.'¹ You have otherwhiles pleased many of your person, who are not to be evened with Giulio, and now you would fain play Saint Touch-me-not and show yourself coy of pleasure, whenas you should seek it with all diligence. Meseemeth I have said enough to you and have put you in mind of your advantage; do now that which seemeth good to you. An you have occasion for my services, both in this and in otherwhat, you will ever find me most ready to oblige you."

Cinzia, hearing the nurse talk on this wise, concluded her to be an arrant bawd and doubted not but she had corrupted more than one lady; then, being in two minds if she should believe that which was told her of Giulio or not, she said to her, "Let there be an end of thy talk and never more bespeak me a word of such fables. An Giulio be (which I believe not) such as thou tellest me, he converseth with me at all hours and will know very well to tell me his case." And the nurse offering to say I know not what, "Go to," quoth Cinzia; "be silent and let me hear no more from thee." It seemed to the nurse that Cinzia was somewhat coyer than she had thought; nevertheless, she forbore not withal to make two or three more assaults as well upon her as upon Giulio, but was sharply rebuffed. Giulio had determined to advertise Camillo of all and was like to have told him how the case stood, but forbore, being not altogether assured of the truth of that which the nurse had told him of Cinzia's mind, and to the latter he dared not say a word of the

¹ See my "Decameron of Boccaccio," Vol. II, p. 234.

matter, lest he should make her think what was not and put a maggot into her head. Cinzia, on like wise, abode in doubt of that which should be done, whether to advise Camillo of the matter or not, and could not resolve herself, still fearing to err, whether she did this or that. But the wicked nurse, seeing that she did but incense the dead¹ and misdoubting her lest her plot should be discovered and her tricks known, determined to take the vantage and feign herself very jealous and tender of Camillo's honour, so she might at the least abide in favour with him. Accordingly, she let give him to understand, by one of his serving-men, that she was solicited of certain young men to leave the house-door open anights, under promise of a good sum of monies, but that she would never do such a thing; wherefore she advertised him thereof, lest Cinzia should be debauched of some one of the many folk who still frequented her and admit whoso was to her liking, unknown of him.

Camillo, hearing this fable, and believing it, (for that he knew by experience how women are whiles fain to spare the household gear and seek to spend that of others, the neighbours' good still seeming to them more savoury than their own,) bade the nurse come to an accord with some one and bring him thither and leave the care of the rest to him. The false jade, however, alleged all manner of excuses and never caused any one come, for that, as was afterwards known, the fact was altogether contrary to that which she had represented to Camillo. She had indeed sounded divers men and promised them to leave the door open, exhorting them to come in by night and

¹ Or, as we should say, "flogged a dead horse," *i.e.* wasted her endeavours upon those who were insensible to her persuasions.

assuring them that they would not find Cinzia contrary. This she did, so she might after say that they had come by Cinzia's appointment and eke for that she herself would fain have brought in certain of her own garden-tillers, of whom she had a horde ; but there was none dared adventure himself for fear of Camillo, who dwelt hard by. Wherefore, seeing that this device availed her not, she let tell Camillo that needs must she bespeak him of a privy matter and one of no small importance. He accordingly came to the house and Cinzia being in company with many folk, he went, under colour of wishing to see his daughter, to seek the nurse in her chamber ; whereupon she, being alone with him, bespoke him on this wise, saying, "Sir, you having given me your daughter in charge, methinketh I am bounden to discover to you all that which I see prejudicial to your honour. Yestereve, you being abroad, Giulio came hither at dusk and abode till past three of the night,¹ although it is the month of June, when, for the shortness of the nights, the season requireth that men should go sleep betimes. Nevertheless, for that he is used to abide here otherwhiles in your absence, I took no heed thereto, knowing that you hold him so dear and that you have more than once, whenas it behoved you depart hence, prayed him remain with Cinzia ; but, meseeming yesternight I saw I know not what which displeased me and hearing certain words which he said to Cinzia and which were, sooth to say, neither fair nor good, there occurred to my mind that which I after found to be the case, to wit, that Cinzia, whenas she hath commodity thereof, taketh amorous pleasure with Giulio and compleaseth him of her body. I must tell you, sir, that young as you see

¹ *l.c.* 11 p.m.

me, I know how things go and am not lightly to be deceived. Suffice it that, wishing to certify myself of the truth and (as the saying is) to take the hen on the egg, I feigned to betake myself to bed; then, having waited awhile, I came softly out and repaired barefoot in the dark to the door of Cinzia's sleeping-chamber, which I found shut, but not made fast with the bolt. Accordingly, I opened it a little so adroitly that I was not heard and plainly perceived (albeit they had set the light, which burneth in the chamber, behind the curtains,) that they were on the bed, dallying amorously together, whereof the creaking of the bed and their broken words and sighs bore manifest witness. I abode there a good while and heard their repeated kisses and the various amorous endearments which passed between them, together with many other little things, which use, as you know, to be done in like cases; then, meseeming I was sufficiently certified of their doings, I returned in silence to my chamber. Presently, feigning the lamp, which I still burn anights for the child's occasions, to be extinguished, I came out, making a scuffling with my feet, and repaired to Cinzia's chamber, where I found the door open and the light restored to its place, and they had seated themselves on the bed, which, all tumbled and undone as it was, bore witness of that which had been done there; and having rekindled my light, I returned to my chamber. God knoweth how little I slept that night and how it irketh and grieveth me to have to give you such news, for that I loved and respected Giulio for your sake. But I am overmuch beholden to you and ought not to fail of advising you of that which pertaineth unto your honour. Marry, I pray you keep it me secret, for many reasons which you may imagine, so Giulio may not do me an ill turn."

Moreover, the rascally nurse, not content with this treason and the better to carry out her villainous design, related this fable to many, so it might be carried by other mouths to Camillo's ears; and the device succeeded but too well, inasmuch as Camillo's mother, his brothers and other his kinsfolk took him very sharply to task of the matter and would fain have constrained him to rid himself of Cinzia's commerce, alleging that not only had she to do with Giulio, but that she made free of herself to others and that the thing was so notorious that it needed no confirmation; which belief arose from the fact that the nurse had whispered about I know not what of divers other young men, who declared that they had oftentimes enjoyed Cinzia's favours. Camillo, hearing these cunningly devised tales and believing them to be true, felt the earth fail under his feet and was so amazed that he knew not what to do. He loved Cinzia supremely, as well for the love himseemed she bore him and the amorous caresses he received from her as also for the virtues and good parts which distinguished her and which rendered her very lovable; wherefore, to hear that she had abandoned herself to others afflicted him overmuch and himseemed he felt his heart torn up by the roots. But that which more than aught else stung him to the quick and miserably tormented him was that so dear a friend as he held Giulio should have done him such an outrage and so enormous a wrong, and his chagrin made such an impress on his heart that he was like to fall grievously sick. He lost sleep and appetite and did nought but rave and conjecture and imagine all manner of extravagances, resolving now one thing, now another. When he remembered him of the heartfelt love and the strait friendship that was between himself and Giulio, himseemed impossible that the latter should ever have done him so great an injury and

shame; nay, though he had seen it, he would not have credited it. On the other hand, recalling the nurse's words and accounting them true, he was constrained to believe that, if indeed any amorous privacies had ensued between Giulio and Cinzia, she¹ was the occasion thereof and had drawn him thereto perforce; and withal it was over-grievous to him to feel himself wronged on such wise by so dear a friend. Affronts are ever irksome and grievous to endure unto those who suffer them; nevertheless, meseemeth there is a great difference between the offence which thine enemy doth thee and that which thou receivest from thy friend. The enemy doth but his office, whenas he injureth his adversary; but if he, whom thou thoughtest thy friend, turn against thee and work thee harm under the veil of friendship, verily, such an offence, inasmuch as he faileth of his duty, striketh its venomous dart deep into the heart and is uneth to endure; yet can a man's prudence, an he will, provide for such cases and cause reason have the upper hand.

Camillo's commerce with Cinzia had now lasted some years and he was daily taken to task by his kinsfolk therefor with sharp reproofs, nay, the bishop of the city, a man of godly life, had more than once besought him to make an end of that practice, which, besides offending God, was a hurt and a dishonour to himself; wherefore, after he had pondered and repondered the matter, feeling it overhard that his friend should have used him thus and himseeming this was an apt occasion to set himself at liberty, he resolved rather to lose Cinzia's converse than Giulio's friendship and accordingly wrote her a letter to the following effect: "Cinzia, thou must not think

¹ *i.e.* Cinzia.

with thine insatiable lust to cause me abandon a gentleman, who is my friend and more than brother, for all he hath been drawn perforce to lie with thee by thy false blandishments and whorish fashions; nay, I will that he be mine more than ever and will still love and revere him as the divine instrument of my recovered liberty, recognizing, as I now do, the unworthiness of my servitude; wherefore do thou think no more of me (such as I am) nor count upon me for the future. Henceforth thou art at liberty and mayst have whomsoever thou wilt to lie with thee night and day; and albeit I might with just cause reproach and complain of thee, I will not do it; suffice it that of deliberate purpose, moved by sure and sufficient reasons, I take myself from thee and leave thee for ever."

This letter he despatched by a serving-man to Cinzia, who, having read it with infinite pain, abode awhile so aghast and so stupefied that she rather resembled a marble statue than a live woman; then, remembering her of the nurse's words, she suddenly bethought herself that what Camillo wrote to her came all of that woman and that he meant it of none other than Giulio, wherefore she sent to call the latter to her and awaited his coming, all full of tears and sighs. Giulio presently came to her and finding her thus afflicted, asked her what ailed her; whereupon she showed him what Camillo had written her. The sight of this struck Giulio with a grievous and unexpected wound and he abode a pretty while silent, hiding as most he might the inward and infinite pain which this calumny caused him; then, after some talk, having told one the other that which the nurse had before said to each separately, they came to the conclusion that it was she who had hatched the whole plot and had with her

lying tales made Camillo believe that which was not. Giulio accordingly comforted her with good words as best he might and assured her that the truth would ultimately be known; then, taking leave of her, he went in quest of a friend of his, who also was a great friend and familiar of Camillo's and was called Delio and finding him in act to write sundry letters, said to him, after the wonted salutations, "I know, Delio mine, that thou marvellest at my coming at so early an hour, the sun being scarce yet risen in the East; but thou wilt marvel yet more, when I tell thee the occasion thereof. Thou knowest the 'friendship that is between Camillo and myself nor doth it need that I inform thee thereof, inasmuch as thou hast had many occasions of seeing that I make no difference between him and my natural brothers, for that certes I love him as my very life. I know also that thou knowest how much in mine own despite, I having been bred at the court of Rome and having sojourned long at those of France and Spain and commersed in many parts of those kingdoms, I abide in this my native land, where the life is very foreign to my nature and to the manners of the places where I was reared and where I have long lived. Wherefore thou rarely seest me consort with the townfolk here, for that they savour nothing of the courtier and their mode of life is very different from the usance which I would fain see in my native land, but I have made my life with Camillo and one or two others, who also have been abroad and have learned a thousand fair fashions of living and civil usances, as likewise to entertain strangers and honour them. Moreover, these our fellow-citizens have one and all this maggot in their heads, that each would fain be accounted the chiefest man of the city, and thou seest them go strutting along the streets, with crest erect and puffed-out breast, look-

ing hither and thither to see who giveth them the bonnet, who inclineth himself to them, as they were great counts and cavaliers and seigniors of the city. Methinketh there be no folk in Italy, who delight more in titles of honour, such as marquess, count and cavalier, than do these, for that they marvellously rejoyce to be called by the like names, though they may not have the means to live like gentlefolk. Now I am one of those, to whom these empty grandeurs and vain titles are more irksome than the pest and I set more store by the goodly substance which our ancestors have by ancient inheritance left to my brothers and myself than by being called cavalier or count; marry, indeed, I would fain have the roast and not the smoke, for that the roast nourisheth and the smoke stifleth and killeth us. But, for that we have oftentimes devised of this, blaming the way of living of this place and wishing, though in vain, that there were here those honourable and laudable privacies which obtain in many other cities of Lombardy, I will say no more upon this subject save that, being unemployed and whiles knowing not whither to betake myself, I oftentimes resorted to Cinzia's lodging, where I passed the time in playing, singing, jesting and story-telling; and eke I went thither more frequently and tarried there longer than others for a reason whereof thou knowest I have more than twice or thrice bespoken both Camillo and thyself. Now I know not what is to do nor what I am to think. This morning, very early, Cinzia sent for me and I found her in the utmost affliction, consuming herself in groans and lamentations and refusing to be anywise comforted. As soon as I came, she gave me this letter that Camillo hath written to her; take it and read it." And here he proffered the letter to Delio, who took it and read it forthright.

When he had read it, Giulio took up again the thread

of his speech and said, "Camillo, as thou mayst apprehend, hath taken a strange fantasy into his head (I know not on what foundation) that I have, contrary to all right and behoof, become possessor of Cinzia; whom God knoweth I have still loved as an own and dear sister and may God wreak all manner of ruin upon me if I ever thought to do with her aught other than honourable. Now, by the tenor of this his letter that thou hast read, I am fain to believe that he can speak of none other than myself, for that none other frequenteth the house who is united with him by friendship as I have still been. Now I would have thee lend me thine aid and counsel me how I should govern myself in this case; for that, being in effect innocent, I would not for all the gold in the world have Camillo abide with such an ill opinion of me at heart. Marry, I would rather die than commit such a folly against so dear a friend, and indeed I know not what greater injury than this might be done him. Nay, I will say more; if I am e'en to be defamed, without the means of justifying mine innocence in the eyes of the world, I should deem it a lesser evil to have at the least tasted the little pleasure in question than thus to abide reproach without cause. Algames, to speak seriously, when a man hath done no wrong and feeleth that others blame him unjustly, he recketh little of his detractors, knowing himself to be without fault. But, to return to my case, I shall never rest content, what while I think that Camillo hath this suspicion of me. He and thou know e'en where my thoughts are set and if I love loyally, believing myself beloved. Indeed, till death close these mine eyes, I shall persevere in my faithful service and shall ensue it with that sincerity which I would have observed towards myself; nay, methinketh I should deserve to be called the most disloyal gentleman in the world and

confess myself worthy of the severest chastisement if I should, for any woman alive, forsake my mistress and clap up with another lady. Can Camillo, then, think that I should, to boot, do *him* this wrong? God forbid that I should ever fall into such an error! So that, Delio mine, I am here in thy hands for counsel and for aid, unknowing whither else to recur than to thee, for that I know thou lovest me."

Delio, having intently hearkened to this strange and fashious story, abode awhile silent, full of amazement and revolving various things in himself. Knowing how Camillo loved Giulio and how thoroughly he was requited of him, himseemed none should anywise suffer so loyal a fraternity to be marred; and knowing, moreover, by long experience, (for that he was a man advanced in years and had seen much of the world in Italy and abroad and had sojourned at divers courts and with various princes) how unneath it is to find a friend who may with truth be called such, it grieved him sore to see Camillo's heart invaded by the fretting canker of despite against Giulio; wherefore he resolved, what while the malady was not yet over-fast rooted, to use every endeavour to tear it up and altogether eradicate it, and that so much the gladlier for that he was firmly persuaded of Giulio's innocence in the matter. Accordingly, after many words, he concluded to go with Giulio to seek Camillo and use all possible means to do away that conceit from his head; and so they both went thither after dinner and found Camillo in his chamber, reading in a certain book.

After due greetings given and rendered, Delio offering to speak, Camillo took the words out of his mouth and turning to Giulio, bespoke him on this wise, saying, "I am exceeding well pleased, Giulio mine, that Delio is here present

with you, inasmuch as, he being a friend unto us both, I would fain, for thy satisfaction and mine own, have him bear eternal witness of that which I purpose to say to thee. Accordingly, not to waste time, I must tell thee I am certified that Cinzia amorously compleaseth others than myself of her person and know that thou thyself hast sundry whiles lain with her. With her I know full well what I have to do and have already given her to understand what I have resolved in mine own mind; and for that I tender the least hair of thy beard far more than all the Cinzias in the world, I declare and affirm to thee that I shall never for this hold thee less dear than I have always done; nay, an it fail not for thee, I will have our friendship be as it was before; wherefore, an thou have occasion to make proof of me, as well in the matter of my life as of my substance, thou wilt find no man, be he who he may, of whom thou mayst so freely dispose at thine every pleasure as thou shalt still do of me. Do but prove me and thou wilt see the effect conformable unto these my words; and of that which I say to thee may our Lord God be my witness in heaven and Delio here upon earth. Marry, I will not have it be in the power of a lewd and false woman to sever our ancient friendship, which began with our earliest years and hath hitherto still gone indissolubly waxing. And so I pray God that thou remember thee of that which hath happened as little as I shall do, for that I have already cast it behind my back and buried it in eternal oblivion. Let us leave these vile and sorry women to live as besemeth the like of them (God give them an ill year!) and let us apply to live together in pleasance and allegresse. I was the slave of yonder strumpet, deeming her other than she is; but she is e'en of those ribald women, who study nought save to do whatsoever occurreth to their thought, be it good

or ill. Let her do what she will ; henceforth she will be at liberty and may abide day and night with whoso most liketh her.”

Here Camillo was silent and Giulio thus replied to him, saying, “It grieveth me far more than thou thinkest, Camillo mine, that there should have arisen between us so sinister an occasion of loosing the bond of our more than brotherly friendship ; for I am very certain that, an it remain fixed in thy belief that I have been so disloyal as to have amorous commerce with Cinzia, it cannot be but thou will still hold me for treacherous and insensible of that which friendship importeth between two comrades, who may and should have everything in common, except women. I for my part judge thus and am fain to believe that every one is of the same mind, inasmuch as I would never brook that either thou or others should wanton it with her whom I love and shall love as long as I live. Thou mayst indeed say (as thou hast said) that thou hast cast the matter behind thy back ; but I must remind thee that these are things very easy to say, but that to put them in execution is far more difficult than folk think ; and I for my part shall always believe that he who receiveth an injury such as thou thinkest I have done thee still hath it before his eyes and never forgetteth it. I will then have the thing put to the straitest possible proof, for that I am ready to certify thee that I never thought to stand otherwise with Cinzia than as with one of my sisters, far less to come to any act with her other than honourable. And thou mayst be convinced that, an I left thee with this suspect in thy head, I should never live content nor could I ever be assured that thou wast that loyal friend to me thou hast hitherto been. Nay, who can doubt it to be impossible but that thou shouldst still hold me a most perfidious man and little honourable? Marry, I know that thou art not so

scant of wit nor of such mean mind as to choose to love one, who hath, to thy thinking, dishonoured thee, and to be pointed at with the finger of scorn by the vulgar as a wittol and one who maketh little account of his reputation and his honour. Camillo mine, I am a gentleman and a man of honour and would rather die than commit such a wickedness against thee. Moreover, knowest thou not how much I love her who is the mistress of my heart and whom alone I serve and honour with all reverence? Albeit I find myself presently far distant from her, nevertheless, thou knowest well if I have ever yet chosen to make private with any other woman. And wilt thou now have me fallen so horn-mad as to commit this folly? God forbid that I should ever think of such a thing! Wherefore do thou apply thee to make trial thereof, so thou mayst be certified that Giulio is to thee a true and most faithful friend. But who told thee that I committed this default against thee?" Quoth Camillo, "The nurse told it me." "Then," rejoined Giulio, "it is yonder she-wolf of a nurse who hath palmed off this fable upon thee! She is a tipsy trull and knoweth not what she saith. Were she a man, as she is a woman, I would put out her eyes and make her eat her words at the sword's point, like a liar as she is."

Now Camillo held it to be for certain as the traitress of a nurse had told him, but was loath (albeit the thing had been to him a cause of exceeding annoy) to lose his friend, and accordingly he replied on this wise to Giulio, saying, "I have already told thee and now tell thee anew that, be the thing as it may, I set far more store by thee than by all the Cinzias in the world, and will ever, an it fail not for thee, be to thee that brother and friend which I have hitherto been. Prithce, then, let us speak no more of this matter; it sufficeth me to do myself loose from yonder

woman, since she will have it so. Now, to answer thee a part of that which thou hast said, I tell thee that, albeit some may have heard of thy having to do with Cinzia, nevertheless, when they see that we abide friends and consort together as before, they will give no credence to the tales which may be set afloat among them. Moreover, thou must not think that I shall keep the thing in remembrance; put that fancy out of thy head, for I hope to God that ere a month hath passed I shall have altogether forgotten Cinzia and all that pertaineth to her."

Delio was nowise content that the matter should abide in this confusion, but, taking Camillo, who had already risen to leave the chamber, by the hand, he made him sit down again and bespoke him on this wise, saying, "Camillo, I am assured that thou speakest from the heart and doubt not a jot but thou art minded to be with Giulio as thou hast avouched. But, for God's sake, put away from thine eyes awhile the thick veil of passion which obscureth thy judgment and bethink thee if Giulio should abide thus entangled in this inextricable labyrinth. Thou speakest, indeed, like a gentleman and wilt have him and me be certified that, even though he had done thee this outrage, thou wilt nevertheless still have him to friend and brother; but the thing goeth not aright. An thou desire to show the greatness of thy soul, show it in otherwhat and seek not, whilst approving thyself magnanimous and generous, to have Giulio accounted disloyal and ill bred and thyself of little judgment, that of thy free choice thou takest one to friend, who, an he have done that which is said, meriteth not that thou shouldst anywhit value him and still less that thou shouldst love him or hold him dear. Nay, who is there but, knowing thee to have been wronged of him, will say that thou wouldst fain overrun the mark and do more than

beseemeth unto a gentleman, so Giulio may not be pointed at with the finger of scorn for a sorry and discourteous man and scouted and blamed of all? But tell me, a' God's name, how canst thou but account him the most disloyal and traitorous gentleman in the world, an thou persist in believing that he hath had possession of Cinzia? For thy saying that thou wilt cast the whole behind thy back and bury it in perpetual oblivion, thou mayst e'en say it, but needs must thou find those who will believe it thee. Thou art a man of flesh and blood like other men and hast passions as well as I; the which I warrant thee thou wilt not so easily avail to subdue but they will do their office. Now, for that these first movements of the soul bounden to the body are not ordinarily in our own power and that this thy wound yet bleedeth and showeth over-fresh and deep to brook any medicament which may advantage it, I will for the nonce say no otherwhat to thee, save this alone, that thou bethink thee of Giulio's quality and hers who hath missaid to thee of him and put thyself in his place. To-morrow we will be together with more commodity and less choler and belike I shall find thee more open to receive succour and remedy than thou presently art. I know well that, an thou ponder the matter to-day and this coming night and put despite aside, thou wilt form such a judgment of the case as beseemeth unto thy prudence."

This said, Delio and Giulio took their leave and went a-pleasuring about the city, discoursing various things of that which had passed with Camillo; in conclusion whereof quoth Giulio, "I find myself, Delio mine, in the greatest tribulation in the world, nor do I ever remember me to have been, for whatsoever adverse chance hath betided me, in such confusion of mind as I presently feel; nay, I am more irresolute and dubious than before and racked by so

many conflicting thoughts that I know not what to do. I see Camillo firmly convinced that I have done him this wrong and albeit he still saith he will e'en be my friend as he was, I know not (even as thou toldest him) how this may be possible. Meseemeth (and my opinion is founded upon reason) that what while he remembereth him (and he will ever remember him) of this thing, he will never more regard me with a friendly eye; nay, thinking I have done him a mortal injury, he will still have this humour on his stomach, which will never suffer him to rest, but will, except it be promptly purged, go daily waxing. I would, then, beseech thee to take upon thyself the burden of bespeaking him again and doing thine utmost endeavour to persuade him apply to certify himself of the fact as it is and not persist in lending such credence to a brazen-faced strumpet." Delio promised to do everything in his power, but said that himseemed well to abide yet three or four days, so that, the first passions having subsided, he might find Camillo more open to persuasion of the truth. His opinion commended itself to Giulio and accordingly, having made an end of their talk, they went each to do that which most pleased him.

Camillo was on the morrow constrained by sundry gentlemen to visit Cinzia and had with her a long conference anent the matter. She, knowing herself guiltless and it being over-grievous to her to lose her beloved lord without her fault, protested her innocence as most solemnly she might and still, as she talked, her face was channelled with hot and bitter tears; but Camillo to all she could say answered her only that she must provide herself with another man, assuring her that, whereas he might pleasure her, he would still do it with all his heart, so but he had no more love-dealings with her; and with this declaration he took

leave of her and returned home. Delio spoke with him once or twice, but could get nothing from him save that he meant to continue Giulio's friend and that, if he had a mind to confront the nurse, he would produce her to that end. As for Cinzia, whoso sought, one by one, to tell what were her thoughts, what the tears she shed, what her woeful words, her wakeful nights and her fasting days, would have overmuch to do and would not lightly make an end withal; suffice it to say that the wretched damsel, losing sleep and appetite, grew pale and lean and haggard, as she were a ghost, and could do no otherwhit than weep and woefully bemoan herself, nay, so piteous were her tears and lamentations that they had moved Hyrcanian tigers to pity. Camillo, on like wise, albeit he sought to show that the thing concerned him not, was nevertheless seen to be pale and afflicted, the native colour of his face being changed and he being well-nigh always full of heavy sighs, which bore witness of inward grief.

Giulio, on his side, could find no repose, unable to brook the thought that it lay in the power of a vile woman to make him lose so good a friend as he accounted Camillo, and was still instant with Delio to procure it to be come to all possible proofs and explanations. Delio, who had again and again essayed Camillo, but had found him still of one tenor, was passing weary of the business and it nowise pleased him that they should resort to confrontation with the nurse; wherefore he said to Giulio, "I would fain know what thou wilt do. an thou come face to face with the nurse and she (as she doubtless will) persist in her obstinacy, affirming anew that which she hath already said. Knowest thou not that there is no pertinacity or obstinacy in the world to compare with that of a perverse woman? Methinketh she will rather die than unsay herself; nay,

she will heap lies upon lies. An she declare that she saw thee abed with Cinzia, what wilt thou say? The more thou deniest it, the more boldly will she affirm it. Wilt thou offer to come to the ordeal of arms and do battle with a whore?" At this Giulio abode stupefied and well-nigh beside himself, acknowledging that Delio spoke the truth; nevertheless, impatient to rid himself of the annoy wherein he found himself, "I know very full well," quoth he, "that thou sayest sooth and that, if this wicked woman choose to be obstinate and persist in her lies, I can nowise misprove her by evidence and we shall be worse off than ever; but meseemeth Camillo should put far more trust in my most true words than in the lies of a woman of the vilest sort, whom he hath again and again proved to be a liar. Again, who knoweth but she may repent her of having so falsely misspoken and may choose to tell the truth and discover to what end she hath forged this fable? Or belike she may change countenance and say after another fashion or give some sign whereby Camillo may lightly know my loyalty and the malignity and perfidy of this ribald quean. Wherefore prithee look it be come to such trial as may be, so Camillo may manifestly see that I lack not of goodwill to convince him of my innocence by such means as are in my power."

Delio, having found Camillo persist in his belief and still give him one same answer, knew not how to govern himself; for that, indeed, in such a case as this, the nurse having laid her web so well and there being no witness to affirm the contrary, it seemed (albeit she alone should not have availed more than Giulio and Cinzia, who denied the fact) that all who heard the tale inclined rather to believe the ill than the good; wherefore he knew not what to do. Nevertheless, being constantly urged by Giulio, he told him that he would

essay anew what he might do and that he was firmly persuaded that Camillo in a little while would of himself recognize the truth nor persist in lending overmuch credence to a vile baggage of a woman. But Giulio still insisting that Camillo should be spoken with and the thing brought to the proof, Delio said to him, "Since thou art e'en resolved to enter the lists with the nurse, meseemeth we should both go seek Camillo and learn if he will have thee confronted with her in his house or in that of Cinzia." Accordingly, they repaired to Camillo and having entered upon discourse of the matter, Delio said to him, "Camillo, I have told thee again and again that, albeit thou allegest thyself disposed to hold Giulio in such and the same account as that wherein thou haddest him aforetime, he is no whit content in his own mind to leave thee in thy present opinion; wherefore, to see an it be possible to put this maggot out of thy head, he is here ready to make thee all such proofs thereof as thou mayst devise." Quoth Camillo, "I know no better way than to go to Cinzia's lodging and there send for the nurse and hear what she shall say and what Giulio will reply to her."

Therewithal they all three betook themselves to Cinzia's house, where they found her abed and still weeping bitterly, and seated themselves about the bed, whilst Camillo proceeded to bespeak her thus, saying, "I was resolved, Cinzia, that it should be no more spoken of that which it was given me to understand had befallen between thyself and Giulio, inasmuch as, for that which pertaineth to me, I have buried the whole in eternal oblivion and would eke have had Giulio do the like and that we should remain friends and brothers as we were before. However, by request of Delio, unto whom I may deny nothing, how grave soever it be, we are come hither, and the reason of our coming is that Giulio allegeth

that to be untrue which the nurse with her own lips discovered to me of him and thee and would e'en disprove it to her face." Scarce had he made an end of his speech ere Cinzia, all in tears, said, "I would our Lord God might vouchsafe to hearken to me in this case and make such a sign as should suffice to show forth my innocence and the falsehood and lying craft of the nurse, so it might publicly be known whether of us twain meriteth blame and chastisement; and of this I beseech Him as heartily as of aught whereof I ever besought Him. But, an it be allowed me, Camillo, to speak the truth, I believe and hold it for certain that thou wast weary of my converse and soughtest but an excuse to abandon me, but thinkest by this means to give whoso shall know the thing to believe that thou haddest just cause therefor. Now God pardon it to thee! Thou mightest e'en have ensued thine intent by another way and not have done me this undeserved dishonour. Thou wast still at liberty to leave me and mightest have done so whensoever it pleased thee, saying, 'Cinzia, I will have no more to do with thee, for that thy converse pleaseth me no longer.' Knewest thou not that I could not enforce thee to love me in thine own despite nor against thy will? But it sufficed thee not to be no more mine; thou hast chosen to defame me and cause me be accounted a lewd woman, whereas by God's faith I am not; for that, since I became thine, I have never failed of my duty to thee nor done thee wrong; nay, more, never had I a thought of sinning against thee. If thou or others have seen me familiar with Giulio and have seen us bytimes make merry together and rally each other laughingly, there hath never been aught other than honest to be seen or heard between us, no, nor aught that is not used between friends. Nay, who forsooth hath commended him to my favour more

than thou, who hast so many a time praised and extolled him to me, still affirming to me that thou hadst never known nor proved a worthier or more loyal man than he? Now I, from the first day I became thine, resolved in myself to will no otherwhat than that which thou willedst; wherefore, knowing how much thou lovedst him and how dear thou tenderedst him and seeing how greatly thou desiredst that he should be made much of, I, as well to compleas thee as also for that I saw he deserved it, made myself familiar with him, but still as with my brother. And so much the fainer was I to converse with him as I still found him all thine and clearly apprehended that he loveth thee far better than his own brothers. But with God be it! In this sore affliction wherein I find myself, I have e'en this scantling of comfort (if indeed my infinite dolour admit of any solace) that thou canst never with reason complain of me; but I have just cause to complain and bemoan myself of thee." Quoth Camillo, "I will not fail thee of all that can succour thee, as by effect thou shalt prove; but I will have no more love-commerce between us, it being presently time that I attend to my affairs. Now, come; we are here to confront Giulio with the nurse and make an end of this idle talk."

The nurse was accordingly called and being exhorted to speak the truth, for that no hurt should be done her, repeated, in a low voice and with broken speech, the lying tale which she had already told Camillo, but not so orderly and precisely as before. Certes, it is a hard thing to avail so well to colour a lie that it shall have the semblant of truth and to tell it still after one fashion; wherefore it is said that it behoveth a liar have a good memory. The nurse having made an end of her tale, Giulio turned to her, all full of choler and despite, and with a stern air said to her

wrathfully, "I will not set myself to dispute and wrangle with thee of this that thou falsely avouchest, inasmuch as it would avail me nothing to deny that which thou art disposed to affirm, be it good or bad ; for I know that there is no obstinacy under the stars greater than that of thy like. Marry, I say thou nowise tellest the truth, and albeit it grieveth me incredibly to abide with this stain in the eyes of Delio and Camillo, for that I know not what they will believe of this thy falsehood, yet my conscience somewhat consoleth me, knowing myself as I do innocent of this thing, and I trust in God that time, which is the father of truth, will make the whole manifest, even as it is, and discover thy lies."

Cinzia said the same, weeping the while ; but the villainous nurse abode with her eyes on the ground, oftentimes changing colour, nor answered them a single word ; and Camillo, after many words, said to the lady, "I have told thee, Cinzia, and I tell thee now again, that thou art free and mayst provide thee at thy guise and take who shall most please thee to lover, for that I will henceforth be mine own man and do with myself as I will, nor will I be private with thee more ; but whereas I may advantage thee, I will well so to do that thou shalt know that I am a gentleman." Whereupon quoth Cinzia, "Since, then, thou art resolved to be no more to me that which thou wast in the past, I prithee, at the least, vouchsafe me a favour, which will be nothing to thee and will be to me a source of the utmost contentment." "Ask," said Camillo. "If it be aught wherein I may avail to compleas thee, I freely grant it thee." And she, "I would have thee be pleased to leave me thine and my little daughter and promise me not to take her from me." "That will I do very readily," replied Camillo, "more by token that I am persuaded I have nought to do with her, not

accounting her mine, for that, as thou hast presently compleas'd another of thy body, I may with reason believe that thou hast otherwhiles done the like ; so that she shall be left to thee. Now, no more talk, for that overmuch hath been said. I leave thee nor will on any terms have it said that thou art mine any more. Abide with God and look to give thyself pleasure." And so he left her, he and all the rest, and departed thence ; whereupon the wretched and disconsolate damsel was so overcome with excess of grief that she swooned away and gave no sign of life. Her mother, seeing her daughter at so ill a pass, fell to weeping bitterly and cried out, "Ah, woe is me, Cinzia is dead !" Whilst the old father, who chanced to be below, hearing the piteous voice of his weeping wife, mounted the stairs and entered the chamber, where he also, supposing his daughter to have given up the ghost, fell a-weeping and making a sore lament. Meanwhile the nurse with an ill grace exhorted the poor old folk to succour the damsel, saying that she was aswoon ; whereupon they busied themselves as best they knew about her, chafing her hands and body in divers places and sprinkling water on her face, and enforced themselves by these and other means to recall her strayed vital spirits. Cinzia's scant and feeble faculties being thus with exceeding pains brought back to the afflicted body, the disconsolate damsel, refusing all consolation, long bewept and bemoaned her sorry fate ; then, seeing that she wearied herself in vain, she turned her mind to thinking on what wise she might deliver herself from those her grievous tribulations and make an end by death of so dour and woeful a life.

But now let us leave her awhile to this her fell purpose, giving her leisure the better to ponder her case, and return to Delio, who, what while he abode in Cinzia's chamber,

would on no wise say aught ; but, whenas they had left her house, he bespoke Camillo thus, saying, "Since all things are possible, it may be that the nurse hath told the truth ; but it followeth not therefor that she hath in effect told it, for that between maybe and is¹ there is a great distance and a wide difference nor can it be affirmed that, because a thing may be, therefore it is. However, be it as it may, I cannot bring myself to believe that, if Giulio had a mind to take carnal delight with Cinzia, he would ever have left the door open, especially as he had otherwhiles abidden with her in the chamber with the door shut. Bethink thee, Camillo, how many a time, departing the chamber, there being none other therein than Giulio and Cinzia, thou hast closed the door, which, thou knowest, locketh itself, an it be drawn to the jamb. Wherefore I cannot think Giulio so crackbrained as to leave the door unlocked, an he had a mind to ply such a craft ; nay, I believe that yonder trull of a nurse hath forged this lie for some purpose of her own. Nor do I tell thee this, to induce thee to clap up again with Cinzia, for that thou well knowest how many a time, both in mine own name and in that of my lord bishop, I have exhorted and yet again at this present exhort thee to desist from that little honourable commerce ; nay, I say it for that I would not have the grudge abide which meseemeth hath arisen between thee and Giulio and which will be cause that there will no longer be that sincere friendship which was erst between you. Moreover, by that which I have heard from the nurse (and thou sawest how coldly and well-nigh as in a dream she told her story) I apprehend that she knoweth not what she saith and that this is a plot hatched, I know not to what

¹ *Dal potere all' essere*, i.e. between a possibility and an actual fact.

end, and I am fain to believe that, an thou make her tell it once more, thou wilt see that she will either add or abate somewhat and that she will vary the particulars. Marry, I warrant thee she hath lost all credit with me and for my part, whatever she might say to me, I would not believe the Evangel from her lips ; nay, but that thou hast for the nonce thine eyes so veiled with dire despite and that thou art so blinded by overmuch passion, thou wouldst certainly be of the same opinion as myself." Quoth Camillo, " It booteth not to say otherwhat, I having plainly manifested my mind as well towards Giulio as towards Cinzia." Then, the discourse ended, Delio and Giulio took their leave ; whereupon the latter, seeing the thing go from bad to worse and that it was not like to take a favourable course, said to the former, " I see that Camillo is set upon believing falsehood from yonder hussy of a nurse rather than truth from me ; wherefore I am resolved to betake me for a while forth of the city, to eschew these many vexatious and poignant annoys, which do away my wit. Maybe time will open Camillo's eyes and cause him recognize my innocence and the wickedness of the treacherous nurse."

Meanwhile, Cinzia, who suffered the direst affliction, herseeming she might not live without her lover, sent for Flaminio Astemio, who was a friend of Camillo, Delio and Giulio. He, having heard her story and accounting it true, spoke several times with Camillo, but still in vain ; which Cinzia understanding and knowing herself wrongfully accused, she fell into the abyss of despair and resolved to abide no more on life, herseeming it was far easier to die than to live in such torment ; but of the manner of her death she was doubtful, knowing not on what wise to cut the thread of her troubled life. Her heart suffered her not to slay herself with her own hand by means of steel, seeing

she feared her weak and trembling hand would not suffice unto such an office; neither had she the courage to hang herself up by the neck and to make so miserable a spectacle of herself. It remained to her to mortify herself with hunger and to waste herself away little by little or to cast herself down from the windows to the earth and break her neck or throw herself into a stream which passeth through the city and drown herself in the water; but none of these fashions of death was to her liking; wherefore, after much consideration, still persisting in her dire purpose, she ultimately elected to end her days by poison and so rid herself of her miseries. Alack, unwary youths and you, simple women, who think it sport to lead a lover's life, beware lest you suffer yourselves to be lured on such wise of excessive love that you may not after draw back, and above all despair not. Be this hapless damsel a warning to you, who of her despair, herseeming she might no more avail to enjoy her lover, hath elected to poison herself.

Now there frequented the house an official of the court,¹ by name Il Greco da Santa Palma and a great friend of Camillo's. She sent for him and asked him if he were acquainted with one Gerone Sasso, who, by that which was bruited about in all the city, was an arrant rogue and passed for being, among his other knaveries, without peer in distilling and refining poisons. Moreover, it was the public report that, wishing to make proof of a certain poison of his composition, he essayed it upon a serving-wench of his, who had been more than twenty years in his service and who in a brief space died. Nay, I chanced to be present one day when a great lord said to him, "Marry, Gerone, it was a fine recompense thou gavest thy maid, who had

¹ *Uomo di palazzo.*

served thee so many years, whenas, with four drops of water of thy distilling, thou sentest her to the other world ;” and the villain dared not deny it, but grinned and feigned to take it for a jest. But to return to Il Greco, he answered Cinzia that he knew him familiarly, and she, “I have a service to ask of thee and will require thee thereof in due time.” However, on consideration, she bethought herself not to seek to make use of Il Greco in the matter, for that he was over-familiar with Camillo, and presently remembering her of Mario Organiero, who also had the repute of distilling and compounding death-dealing waters, the which, being swallowed in wine or otherwise, killed whoso drank thereof in two or three days’ time and without outward and visible sign, resolved to have recourse to him. Accordingly, for that he was her friend, she wrote him a billet, alleging certain reasons of her invention, to wit, that she was constrained, at the instance of a gentleman, to beseech him be pleased to give her a spoonful of his water, assuring him that the thing should be most secret and that thereby she would gain fifty gold crowns.

Now Mario knew that Camillo had renounced his commerce with Cinzia and reading her letter, misdoubted him she was minded to poison him ; wherefore he went to visit him and said to him, “I know not who hath given Cinzia to understand that I distil poisonous waters, the which is no business of mine, nor indeed should I wish to be able to do it, for God keep me from such wickednesses ! But, because I delight in distilling odoriferous waters and making scented oils and compounding washes and cosmetics for ladies, some have fastened this ill name on me ; God make them as sorry as I would fain be glad !¹ Now, see what

¹ Lit. “good.”

Cinzia writeth me ; for that, an she would have other than poisonous water, there were no need to tell me that she will be secret and that she will gain fifty crowns thereby." Camillo, having read the letter, judged Mario's opinion to be correct, but could not believe that she was anywise minded to poison herself. For himself he feared not a jot, being resolved to eat and drink no more with her. Accordingly, he abode perplexed concerning the matter nor could resolve himself to what end she sought such a water. Nevertheless, the better to learn her intent, he prayed Mario entertain her with fair words and feign not to understand what water she wished and advertise him of what she should answer ; wherefore he wrote to Cinzia that he knew not what sort of water she required ; that, an she sought a cosmetic water, to purge and soften the skin and make it white, rosy and lustrous or to do away hair, he had thereof, but that a spoonful was not like to produce any good effect.

Cinzia, having this reply and being firmly convinced that Mario made poisons, wrote back to him that she wanted a poisonous water ; whereupon he showed her letter to Camillo and asked him what he should do. "Faith, sir," answered he, "let us e'en serve her as she deserveth. Do thou write to her that thou hast not of such water made, but that, albeit it is a very grave matter and incredibly difficult to make, yet, for the love of her, thou wilt, in four or five days' time, make her a little vial thereof. When she shall want the poison, send her nothing without my knowledge, and then I will have thee send her mere well-water, with some slight admixture to give it a little smell, that can do her no hurt." However, Cinzia,—wishing to try everything rather than die and to essay an she might avail to recover Camillo's favour and bring him

to see that she had never sinned against him nor done him any wrong,—albeit she was very weak, betook herself as best she might, upborne more by desire than by strength, to Il Greco's house and entering into discourse with him, related to him, with eyes full of tears, all that had ensued between Camillo and herself, studying to make it plain to him how she for her part had nowise made default and that she was wholly innocent of that whereof the nurse accused her. Il Greco, wishful to make peace between them, laboured thereat amain, but could effect nothing; the which the afflicted damsel hearing and unknowing what other means to try or whither to turn, she began again to urge Mario, being resolved without fail to die.

Meanwhile the nurse, repenting her of what she had told Camillo and urged by I know not what, that left her no peace, sent to him to meet her in a church alone and there said to him, "I know not, sir, what god or demon of hell importuneth and tormenteth me day and night, so that I can find no repose, and meseemeth I still have a sharp knife in my heart. I know not whence this may arise, except it be that I falsely impeached Giulio and Cinzia of that whereof I myself know nothing whatever and which I never anywise saw; so that all I told you otherwhiles and repeated to you in the presence of those gentlemen is a lie and an invention of mine own nor did ever other bespeak me a word of the matter. I crave your pardon and entreat you to grant me my life, which I confess to have justly forfeited, having dared to commit so enormous a wickedness with my false words. Behold, I cast myself at your feet, humbly beseeching you of mercy." Camillo, at this unhopd speech, abode full of infinite allegresse, seeing that Giulio was not guilty, and after he had once or twice caused the nurse repeat

the thing to him, "Certes, wicked woman," quoth he to her, "I know not what punishment and what cruel torment were sufficient to give thee due chastisement, so the punishment might match with the sin; for that, as far as in thee lay, thou appliedst thyself to sow an eternal enmity between Giulio and myself and to cause otherwhat than words ensue thereof; but I will not commit myself with the like of thee and will leave to our Lord God the care of this vengeance; for that I myself might not avail to find any torment equal to thine enormous wickedness. Now I will have thee repeat this that thou hast presently discovered to me in the presence of Delio and Giulio and of divers other men of worth whom I shall bring with me, and look moreover thou say no word of this to Cinzia nor to whosoever else, save in so much as I shall enjoin thee."

She promised to do all that should be commanded her of him; whereupon Camillo went straight to find Delio and full of joy, related to him how the nurse had unsaid the infamous accusation made by her against Giulio and Cinzia and told him likewise of the poison which the latter sought. Moreover, he showed him a letter from her, whereby she prayed him be pleased to visit her once more only, for that she would fain bespeak him of somewhat, which would be the last words she should ever say to him, and bring with him Delio, Flaminio, Giulio, Il Greco and certain others, adding that she would advise him of the day when he should do this. They both held it for certain that the afflicted damsel was minded to poison herself in despair; wherefore they agreed together to wait and see what she should go about to do. Camillo accordingly let Mario know whenas he should send the water to Cinzia, whereupon the distiller wrote to her that the water would be ready on such a day

and bade her send for it in the morning, when she should have it without fail. Cinzia, having this assurance,¹ wrote to Camillo that she expected him that same day after dinner, with those friends whom she had named to him, for that the day so much desired of her was come, wherein she purposed to certify the whole world of her innocence and trusted to have it recognized that she had never failed of her faith. The evening before the day when she was to send for the water, Camillo went with Delio to visit Mario, and taking a very small glass vial, filled it with well-water, wherein they put somewhat of powdered cloves to flavour it. On the morrow, Cinzia sent a maid-servant to fetch the water and Mario wrote to her that, constrained by her urgent prayers, he sent her the water, the which indeed he would have denied to his own father; wherefore he charged her very straitly not to discover to the gentleman, to whom she said she was to give it, that she had it from him, advertising her, to boot, that it would give no pain nor do other apparent hurt, but would cause whoso drank it die suddenly in one or two hours at the most thereafterward, without leaving any mark on the body; and so he gave the servant the water and the letter.

Cinzia, who was abed, took the vial and hid it under the pillow on such wise that, being stoppered, it might not be overset; then, being resolved to make one last attempt to recover Camillo's favour and failing of it, to die, she awaited the coming of her lover with the others bidden to those funereal nuptials. As the appointed hour drew nigh, she felt a freezing chill in all her limbs, together with certain spasms of the heart, as she were about to be overcome

¹ *Fermezza for assicuranza*, a typical instance of Bandello's ignorance of his own language and lack of skill in handling it.

with the quaking cold of the quartan ague. Moreover, when she heard those whom she had bidden mount the stairs,—whether it was her strong and lively conceit of death near at hand or eke the approach of her lover, or whatever was the cause thereof,—there spread an ice-cold sweat all over her, so that she began to tremble neither more nor less than as she had been naked in January midmost a courtyard, under a fall of frozen snow-flakes,¹ and eke herseemed her heart should cleave asunder in her breast for very anguish and oppression. The friends presently entered and seeing Cinzia abed, trembling and covered with sweat, saluted her and asked her how she did. She answered in a low voice that she did as it pleased God and Camillo; whereupon quoth the latter, “This is idle talk, to hearken to which we are not here; nay, we are come hither to learn that which thou wrotest us thou wouldst fain say to us.” And she, “I will say it when all are here, and I see neither Delio nor Giulio;” for that the latter was obstinate and would on no account enter Cinzia’s house again.

However, Giulio’s house being near at hand, Camillo wrote to Delio, bidding him bring the former without fail and by any means in the world and assuring him that he should hear that which would give him exceeding contentment; and Delio accordingly wrought to such effect that he brought Giulio thither. All being thus assembled in the chamber, they seated themselves in silence about the bed and awaited that which the damsel should say to them.

¹ This reminiscence of the Story of the Student and the Lady (see my “Decameron of Boccaccio,” Day VIII. Story 7) is a curious exemplification (one out of thousands which might be cited) of the completeness with which Bandello was (so to say) supersaturated with the Decameron.

She,—being, as hath already been said, resolved rather to die than lose her lover,—desired withal, before she put her fell purpose in execution, to essay, in the presence of the friends there assembled, if Camillo were minded to put off his suspicion of her and Giulio and continue with her as before, which if he did, she would abide on life ; else she was resolved, swerving no whit from her dire intent, undauntedly to drink the prepared poison and under the eyes of her dearly loved Camillo to depart to the other world, herseeming she might not die better nor softer and featlier rid herself of that her sore and cruel heartbreak than in his presence whom only she loved and who was her God upon earth. Wherefore, after many sighs, composing herself as best she might, she proceeded to speak thus, “Camillo, since it hath pleased God suffer me come to this hour so much (since I have for no fault of mine fallen into disfavour with thee) desired and awaited of me and since belike it is the last time I shall ever speak with thee or with others, I would fain first know what thy mind is at this present towards me ; for, an it be as it should be, I having never offended against thee, it will be that which I supremely desire. If, however, I see thee yet persist in believing of me that which never was, I have some favours to ask of thee and after that shall be which God willeth.” To this Camillo replied that, ere he made her an answer, he would fain have the nurse sent for to the chamber, for that he had some questions to put to her.

The nurse was accordingly called and came as the adder cometh for charming ; to whom quoth Camillo, “Nurse, I certify thee and pledge thee my faith that none shall give thee annoy nor do thee any manner of hurt ; wherefore I will have thee, in the presence of these gentlemen, my friends and brethren, tell us all that which thou latterly

toldest me in the church. Come, speak and fear not." The sorry good-for-nothing wench was all confounded and knew not what to do, but, ultimately, trembling like the leaf in the wind, she confessed the wickedness which she had plotted, declaring that to be altogether false whereof she had erst accused and impeached Giulio and Cinzia and openly avowing that she had laid that vile plot, so she might have Cinzia under her thumb and be more at liberty to wanton it with whoso most pleased her; moreover she related the attempts she had made upon Giulio and Cinzia and to what end, even as I have before told you. How much the vile and wicked woman was blamed by all and especially by Cinzia, each may imagine for himself. Giulio abode all full of despite, and such was the rage which overwhelmed him and the rancour which possessed him against the nurse that he was all puffed up with over-fulness of choler and could avail to say nought. Then, the nurse being sent forth the chamber, "Now, praised be God," quoth Delio, "we are certified that yonder trull of a nurse had over-drunken herself and related that which she dreamed as a thing happened. May God pardon her, since, repenting her of so much evil, she hath confessed her sin! Certes, it behoveth not to deal her any chastisement, since the thing hath ended well, but to leave her be, so she may the better see for herself into what an error she hath fallen." "Nay," interrupted Flaminio, "she ought to be strangled or burned alive; I for my part know well, an she had spoken of me as she hath of Giulio, I would dight her on such wise that she should play no more such tricks. If she must e'en talk at random, she should prate of herself and her peers." "Indeed," quoth Cinzia, "Flaminio saith sooth and speaketh like a good man and a

true; marry, the jade ought to be banished the world and have her slanderous tongue torn out by the roots. Nay, were it not that my little daughter will not suck any other than her, she should not be in the house at this moment; but the love of my child maketh me keep her." In fine, every one would fain have stoned her and called a crusade against her; wherefore, "For God's sake," quoth Delio, "leave the wretch be; nay, since Cinzia saith the child will suck none but her, it behoveth to have regard to her, for that, an she were presently chidden or if any hurt were offered her, she might lightly spoil her milk, the which would be the little one's death. And what vengeance will you take of a vile quean of a woman? Know you not that nature and their sex make women secure from men and that it never beseemeth us to imbrue our hands in their blood? Let us leave her to the judgment of God and the world. It should well suffice us for the present that Giulio is known for a good man and a true and Cinzia on like wise for a woman who hath not been unfaithful unto Camillo; whereat, indeed, for innumerable reasons, I feel an extreme pleasure, seeing the way estopped against many scandals which might otherwise have ensued."

Scarcely had Delio made an end of speaking when Cinzia, turning to Camillo, said, "What thinkest thou to do now, Camillo, now thou mayst be certain that I am innocent and that I deserve not to be abandoned of thee? Wilt thou be to me that which thou wast aforesaid, or what is thy mind?" "Harkye," replied Camillo; "nothing could be more grateful to me than to be certified of the nurse's malice and to know Giulio for that gentleman I have still accounted him; and so have I more than once said to Delio, since the nurse hath unsaid the lies told by her.

For that which pertaineth to thy case, I will have thee ever in regard and succour thee in thine occasions in so far as I may; whereof an thou make proof, thou wilt still find the effect conformable to my words." Cinzia thereupon rejoined with a plaintive voice, saying, "Then, woe is me, I am, without my fault, to lose that which I most love in this world? Must I lose thee, Camillo, my lord? Alack, wretch that I am! Woe's me, unhappier than whatsoever other unhappy woman! What will become of this troubled and wretched life, seeing that I already desire death as a lesser evil, nay, as a remedy and a solacement for mine ills, since he, whom I love beyond all created things and far more than the light of mine eyes, spurneth and abandoneth me without my fault? Welaway, who will give these mine eyes an ample vein of bitter tears, so they may quickly consume this my weak and infirm body, the receptacle and harbourage of every misery and calamity,¹ since he, on whom my life dependeth, denieth me his pity and will have me live without life? But, certes, without life one liveth not. Yet, what say I? To whom do I proffer my vain prayers? To whom do I address these woeful words, an they shall bring me no profit? I see well that I ear the sea and strow seed upon the sand. With God be it; now, Cinzia, it behoveth thee be constant and nowise swerve from thy steadfast purpose. It behoveth thee show an thou love or not."

Therewithal, drying her eyes, she turned anew to Camillo and bespoke him on this wise, saying, "Since thou art resolved to be no more mine as I would fain be thine, prithe, at the least abandon not our poor daughterling, who, whether thou wilt or not, is as much thine as mine,

¹ Boccaccio again.

for thou art her father as surely as I am her mother, and thou knowest that I bore her. On like wise I commend to thee these poor old folk, to wit, my father and mother, who have been to thee such faithful, loving and constant servants, and I heartily beseech thee, if my commerce was ever in the past dear and pleasing to thee (and thou didst e'en feign to love and tender me, as indeed a thousand tokens were witness to me thereof) that thou wilt, of thy courtesy, have them in thy protection and do with them as thou wouldest with me; for that, if they find themselves abandoned of thee, I know not how they may avail to sustain their wretched and disconsolate lives; nay, I commend them amain to thee." "Meseemeth," quoth Camillo, smiling, "thou art about to sail for the islands of the New World and never more to return to these our parts. What is all this? Whither wilt thou go? An thou have a mind to make a will, let me know thine intent, for that I will send to fetch Ser Cristoforo, who is, as thou knowest, a very famous notary, and we will all be witnesses. Come, wilt thou have me send for him?" "I am but a poor damsel," replied Cinzia, "and have neither lands nor substance, whereof to make a will, and all these moveables here in the house thou well knowest are not mine, thou having sent them hither to furnish me the place. And since thou hast taken it into thy mind to abandon me and to break the pledge, so oftentimes confirmed to me with solemn oaths, that thou wouldst never leave me, how know I an thou wilt leave these goods to my father and mother? So that I have not wherewithal to make a will; but by way of testament I will that all the world shall know how wrongfully I have been abandoned of thee and see no less thy dire and fell cruelty and thy little faith; for thou well knowest, Camillo, without my repeating it to

thee, how grievously thou hast wronged me. Remember thee of that which thou hast so oftentimes said, promised and sworn to me ; but I see indeed and know by experience that the wind carried away thy words. God is above and in Him I trust that He, being a just judge and one who leaveth no good unrequited and no ill unpunished, will avenge me, and thou wilt know, in the end, that thou hadst no cause to use me after this fashion. But thy repentance will then profit neither thee nor me any whit. Thou wilt still have at thy heart this gnawing worm of remorse which will without cease torment thee, still picturing to thy mind's eyes this thy present cruelty to me, who have never anywise merited it. Pardon me, my friends who are here, an I say aught which causeth you annoy, and forgive my just and insupportable sufferance. I would that all simple and unwary women were here present, for that I would give them a counsel I have not known to take myself, to wit, that they put no trust in the flattering words of these young men who feign themselves enamoured and dupe as many women as they may have ; nay, I myself can bear the truest testimony thereof." Quoth Camillo, "It booteth not to enter upon these arguments. Meseemeth it is time that I should comply with the demands of mine honour and with my kinsfolk's wishes and attend to otherwhat than to these toys. Thou well knowest that thou canst not become my wife and that some time or other needs must we come to this pass. Marry, I leave thee not for any default that I impute to thee ; that which I do, I do that I may apply to live after another gates fashion than that on which I have lived hitherto ; for that I am no longer a new-fledged lad and know full well how much blame the life I have led till now hath brought upon me and the rebukes which I have at divers times suffered therefor from friends and kinsfolk ;

so that for the future do thou hold me in a brother's stead and I will love thee as a sister. The child I will, as I have hitherto done, let rear for mine and will look to find another nurse, for that I will not have yonder drunken hussy suckle it me more. As for thee, thou mayst, whenas it seemeth good to thee, look thee out one who shall please thee, for thou wilt not lack of young men, handsome, rich, courteous and gallant, with whom thou mayst give thyself the best time in the world and abide without cease in pleasure. Nor for this wilt thou be less dear to me, for that, if I mean for the future to live after mine own fashion and do that which is most to my liking, it is but right and just that thou do that which most pleaseth thee ; and with this I signify to thee my final and determinate resolution and steadfast will."

Cinzia, hearing this, heaved a heavy sigh from the deeps of her heart and giving up all hope, said aloud, "Since Camillo will no longer have me for his on such wise as I have hitherto been and as I wish and infinitely desire, I, being unable to do otherwise, do, by that means which I most easily may and which is vouchsafed to me, take, snatch and tear myself away from him and eke from myself and the world ; for that far better is it for me to die once than to perish a thousand times an hour. Behold, then, the last act of my life." Scarce had she made an end of these last words when, taking up the vial and setting it to her mouth, she at one draught swallowed all the water that was therein and threw the vial behind the bed. Whereupon, "What is this? What is this?" cried the friends who were seated about her and "Certes," cried Il Greco, "she hath poisoned herself ; and now I remember me that, a few days ago, she asked me an I knew that knave, Gerone Sasso, and I replying to her that I did, she rejoined that she would fain ask a service

of him by my means. By my soul, it was the water she would have had from yonder rascal, the which she hath now gotten by other means ! Sirs, you may hold it for certain that she hath drunken poison." "Ay, alas !" said all ; then, rising to their feet, they asked her what it was she had drunken.

Cinzia, nearer, as she thought, to the other world than to this and firmly believing that she had taken poison, composed herself in the bed to await death and waxing for imagination all pale in the face, answered them in a low voice on this wise, saying, "Be assured, dear my friends, that this water which you have seen me drink is on such wise composed and distilled that in less than two or three hours it will send my troubled spirit to the deepest deep of the infernal abyss, inasmuch as, seeing Camillo persistent in no longer willing me for that which I was to him aforesaid, I have chosen no more to be mine own, still less another's. I die and depart this life as willingly and blithely as I would have abidden therein, so but Camillo had willed me for his servant, as I was aforesaid. And believe me of that which I say to you, for that I tell you the truth ; never meseemed was I so content in my life as I am at this present, being, as I am, assured that in a very brief space of time I shall leave all these troubles and afflictions, the which have beyond compare tormented me far more than now doth death near at hand. I still had a most acute and poignant canker at my heart, which ceased not day or night to deal me the cruellest stings, so that meseemed I was pierced through and through in an hundred places and felt myself languish and pine away a thousand times a minute. Now is the end of all ills come. And in truth, my friends, death seemeth not to me so terrible as many will have it ; nay, methinketh it is passing sweet and dear and that it is far better to leave

the world on this wise than to abide the coming of old age, which is so odious to the young, and wait for the divers grievous infirmities and the many kinds of ills, which attend upon it, to cause us rot in our beds. Abide ye in peace and God grant you a better lot than hath been mine !”

Camillo feigned himself the woofullest man that was aye and made as he were all aghast at so grievous a sight. But, as I have already told you, he and Delio had, with Mario, put the water in the vial and knew that it could do no harm ; and they would e'en see if Cinzia was so mad as to go about to poison herself or others. Camillo, then, feigned himself sore afflicted and made as if his eyes were brimmed and blinded with bitter tears. As for Delio, he had so great a mind to laugh that he could scarce contain himself ; however, the better to adorn the tale, he also feigned to be beyond measure woeful, whilst Camillo went up to the bed where Cinzia lay and making as he were overcome with excessive grief, said to her, in a very languorous voice, “ Ah me, Cinzia mine, God pardon thee, what a thought was this of thine to commit so mad and cruel an extravagance and to become thine own murderess ! How could thy heart suffer thee to poison thyself ?” Whereupon she turned to him with a piteous gesture and said, “ Camillo, none who is or will be holden wise should nor may with reason complain of that which hath been by him procured. Of those circumstances only doth it behove to complain which befall untowardly against our will. Wherefore feign thyself not woeful nor pitiful over my case, thou having willed it ; hadst thou desired that I should live, thou shouldst not have abandoned me. Thou wast e'en certified by a thousand proofs that I should not live without thee ; wherefore do thou reserve this thy tardy pity for cases undesired of thee and concern not thyself

for me, who am presently at the term of my ills. I have this comfort, which marvellously rejoiceth me, that, in thy despite, I die thine and close mine eyes under thine; and if in the other life there abide aught of feeling, I shall there will to be thine, as I have been here." Quoth Il Greco, "There is no time to lose; quick, we must succour this mad woman. Needs must antidotes be administered and that without delay. An we had somewhat of unicorn's horn, relief might lightly be afforded her and she might be saved, for that it hath been proved by long experience that this horn, reduced to powder and drunken, is of marvellous efficacy in pestilential maladies, in cases of poisoning and worms in children and other ailments, albeit some say that Hippocrates and Galen make no mention thereof." Quoth Camillo, "I have of this horn," and straightway sent to his house to fetch it.

Now such was the strength of Cinzia's imagination and so throughly was she persuaded that she had taken poison that she felt herself overcome with an icy cold and trembling and herseemed all her vitals irked her sore and her bowels were knotted up into a thousand knots, so that there broke out on her many drops of cold sweat, as big as a vetch. Moreover, so sore and heavy a drowsiness overcame her that she might on no wise keep her eyes open. Camillo and the others stood round about her and comforted her with soft words, exhorting her to seek to cast up the poison and prepare herself to take some remedy. Now there was already procured a beaker of common oil, made lukewarm, so she might swallow it and vomit; but she, still oppressed with the violence of the fit, gave no ear to aught that was said to her. And so she abode a good while, so true is it that imagination oftentimes produceth effect. Then, the paroxysm over, she sighed and opening her eyes, was

exhorted anew to arouse herself and endeavour, by drinking the oil, to vomit ; but it was all preached to the deaf. She was altogether determined to die and would hearken to no talk of antidote nor might anywise be persuaded to drink the oil.

Meanwhile the unicorn's horn had been brought and somewhat of powder taken therefrom by means of a file ; then, the rest of the horn being laid in a beaker so well washed that it seemed of silver, there was poured thereon fair fresh water, as clear as crystal. Delio then took the beaker and proffered it to Cinzia, saying, "Here, Cinzia, is the antidote of the poison thou hast swallowed ; the which an thou drink, thou wilt speedily feel a marvellous assuagement of thine ills ; wherefore do thou pluck up a good heart and drink boldly. Come, tarry no longer ; look how this water boileth and how it sendeth up its bubbles without heat of fire, such is the occult virtue which sovereign nature hath given to this horn." But she gave no sign of offering to drink and making Delio no answer, reclosed her eyes and fell anew to sweating and trembling ; all which proceeded from her lively conceit of having poisoned herself. The horn was taken forth of the water and the powder cast therein ; whereupon Camillo took the beaker in hand and drawing near the damsel, who, the paroxysm over, was now somewhat come to herself, said to her, "Cinzia, look up and speak to me ; I am Camillo. Hearst thou not ? Feelest thou not ? Prithee, hearken to that which I have to say to thee. Do me this pleasure, an thou love me any whit, and drink a good draught of this blessed and salutary water and fear nothing ; nay, be assured that it will give thee new life, as thou shalt presently see by the evident and clear effect thereof. What dost thou ? Anon thou openest thine eyes and anon thou shuttest them.

Marry, it is no time for sleep ; lift thy head and open thine eyes ; see, we are all here to succour thee and deliver thee from peril. Come, tary no longer ; see, here I proffer thee with mine own hand the water, with the powder therein. Come, drink. What dost thou ? See, here it is."

At these words, the damsel raised her head somewhat and opening her eyes, fixed them very piteously upon Camillo's face and said to him in a low and languorous voice, "Camillo, these thy remedies and succours are too late and can no more avail me aught. As thou seest, I am arrived at the desired end of this my weary life, which I may well name a living death. Marry, I am infinitely glad to be come to this extreme pass, which filleth all the world with dread and trembling, but me it rejoiceth and comforteth, as the term of every ill. And albeit I am fully convinced that all the medicines in the world are insufficient and come too late for this mine ill and that nothing can any more avail me, the death-dealing venom having already invaded all parts of my body and usurped my very heart, nevertheless, to show thee that this which I have done I did but for that I might not live without thee and for none other reason, I now tell thee my last will, the which is this. An thou be still resolved, according as thou hast declared, to be no more mine as thou wast before, keep these thy remedies to thyself, for that I will have none of them, and leave me be ; inasmuch as, if I am not to be thine, death is far liefer to me than life. But an thou be minded to be mine, I will content thee and do what thou willest, drinking that which thou shalt proffer me ; and albeit, as I believe, no solace whatsoever should ensue to me thereof, algates, to feel myself die in thy favour will bring me such contentment that I shall die the

happiest and most fortunate lover that ever came into the realms of blissful love. So that, an thou wilt have me take any antidote, understand me well and clearly, I will that thou, in the presence of these our friends, resolve me of thy mind and tell me, in plain words, an thou wilt be mine or not." To this Camillo answered that he had spoken very plainly and that it bootied not to say otherwhat, he having already said enough, wherewith, for the reasons alleged by him, she might very well rest content; and with this he was silent. "With God be it," rejoined she; "do thou after thy fashion and I will do after mine. Thou choolest not to be mine and I choose not to take any manner of remedy, for that, without thee, all medicines would be to me deadly poisons, and living in thy favour, poison might not avail to do me hurt." With these words she laid her head again on the pillow and there abode in act to die.

Those who were there, seeing her constancy and misliking that she should die in despair, came round about Camillo and urgently besought him to satisfy her and to bethink him at what a pass she was. He abode awhile obdurate and would no more bind himself to her; but, at the last, overcome with so many prayers, he bespoken her on this wise, saying, "Cinzia mine, be of good heart; drink this water with the powder, for that, an (as is to be hoped) it make thee whole, I pledge thee my faith to tender thee as before." She, at these words, raised herself, all rejoiced, and took the cup from Camillo's hands; but, ere she set it to her mouth, "Since thou, my lord Camillo," quoth she, "promisest me for the future to be to me that which thou wast aforetime and hast loyally pledged me thy faith thereof in the presence of these our friends, I will take this remedy, and if it profit me, as you all tell me it will, and if its

virtue avail more than the malignity of the poison, I will gladly live, not of any desire that I have to abide on life, but to be with thee and see myself thine and thee mine, the which I desire above all other good. If, again, it avail me nothing, I shall at the least, dying, have this satisfaction, that thou and these our friends will have been visibly certified that I have left nothing undone to be thine, either alive or dead. Moreover, I certify thee that, if this remedy save my life and thou anywise fail me of the promise which thou hast presently made me, I will not fail unto myself, but will undauntedly ensue the determination of my soul; for that, Godamercy, he who hath furnished me with this present poison will, whenas I wish, give me as much again thereof and that same mind and will, which have presently moved me to poison myself, will still be ready to work the same effect. Now will I drink the water."

With these words, she blithely set the beaker to her mouth and swallowed all the water at one draught; what while Camillo bespoke her with many fair words, gently reproving her for the folly committed and exhorting her for the future to be sager and to expose herself no more to such risks, inasmuch as, for once the thing goeth well, an hundred cases go from ill to worse; and so he reasoned with her a good while, giving her the while a thousand caresses and loving endearments. Now, whether it was fancy or the firm belief she had of having poisoned herself, or that she had in her stomach abundance of bile and phlegm and other superfluities, which the unicorn-potion had stirred up, she having drunken a great beakerful thereof, or whatever was the cause thereof, she travailed all that day and could get no rest, complaining without cease of pains in her stomach and bowels and of many and various fumes mounting to her head, which stupefied

her ; but ultimately, having vomited twice or thrice much phlegmatic and bilious matter, she marvellously purged her stomach. If any ask me whence this evacuation proceeded, I am fain to believe that the water, aided belike by the occult virtue of the horn, in part stirred up these matters, especially in a weak stomach, such as she then had ; but meseemeth certain that the undoubting belief she had of having swallowed the poison was the most potent cause of all. Nay, to this very day, according to that which I understand of her, she yet firmly believeth that she poisoned herself, but that the unicorn-horn antidote brought her forth of danger, Camillo not having chosen to discover to her how the affair was ordered. Moreover, being asked, on the morrow, by the friends who came to visit her, how she could have dared voluntarily to drink the poison, she replied to them on this wise, saying, "I was altogether resolved, so soon as I saw myself abandoned of Camillo, to abide no longer on life ; wherefore, not having the heart to slay myself with the steel and having debated many kinds of death, I chose this of poison, as the easiest and least irksome. Meseemed, moreover, that death would not be very grievous to me, dying as I did in his presence for whose sake I was become mine own murderess. And for that I did nought but conjecture and fantasize, I took into my head that it was impossible Camillo could be so cruel but that, seeing me come to so extreme a pass, he would enforce himself to succour me and have compassion upon me. This conceit of seeing him have pity on my pain was a salve to all my torments and in this hope I was ready to die cheerfully." "Go to," quoth Flaminio, "look thou play no more such pranks neither suffer these maggots to enter thy head ; but, if they arise there, let them evaporate ; else wilt thou do it

once too often and the unicorn's horn will not always be at hand. Do it not again ; for, if thou return thereto, thou wilt pay for this and that and wilt appear a fool."

Camillo, then, abode with his Cinzia as before and lived in peace and joyance. Many and various were the discourses among those who knew not how the case stood and they spoke as well of the might of love (the which in truth is most puissant and worketh marvellous effects) as also of the resolute spirit of a woman in love. Some praised and some blamed that which Cinzia had done ; this one called her bold, that mad and a third foolhardy and desperate, according to the various sentiments and opinions of the speakers, whose discourse meseemeth for the nonce unnecessary to recount, for I fear me I have already been overlongsome and have wearied you with my much talk ; but indeed I could do no less, an I would give you to know how the case befell. Now, to make an end of my tale, I must tell you that, what while my terrestrial sun¹ lived, I still desired to be loved as much as I loved and that my lady and mistress should be even such to me as I was to her ; but I would fain not happen on such desperate souls as Cinzia, inasmuch as I might have good cause to believe that, if they scrupled not to be their own murderers, still less would they stick to take the lives of others, whensoever there occurred to their mind the least suspicion of being unloved. Let us, then, pray God to keep us from such women, who should rather be styled desperate than valiant, and let each, an he desire to be loved, apply himself to love ; for that I know of no better philter than this,² albeit it hath profited me

¹ *i.e.* his mistress.

² Comment, disaient ils,
Sans philtres subtils,
Être aimé des belles ?
—Aimez, disaient elles.—*V. Hugo.*

little ; and indeed our wise Dante saith that Love to none beloved pardoneth loving.¹ Nay, an love be not so soon seen to be repaid in kind, a man should not therefore desist from the begun emprise, but persevere with loyalty ; for that it is still seen in the end that, sooner or later, whoso loveth is beloved.

¹ *Amor ch' a null' amato amar perdona.*

Bandello

to the most illustrious seignior Signor Carlo Bracchietto, Seigneur de Marigny and Councillor of the most Christian King in his High Council.

These days newly past, Messer Gian Giordano, being on his way back from Paris, where for some years past he hath daily laboured to good effect before the High Council on behalf of the Lord Bishop of Agen, gave me to understand not only in what lively remembrance you keep my name at heart, but eke (the which proceedeth from your infinite courtesy) in what honourable and affectionate terms you speak of me. This, indeed, I have not merited by any act or desert of mine own nor by any service rendered you, no occasion having offered for you to command me aught, nor have I of mine own motion taken one, seeing not in what my lowliness may advantage one of your exalted rank. It is true, indeed, that, regard had to the desire of my heart and to my intent, which, since I made acquaintance with you, hath still been most prompt to do you service, in so far as hath been possible to me, I deserve to be by you no little loved and holden of the number of your dearest friends, for that it oftentimes behoveth take the will for the deed. Now, the magnificent cavalier Messer Gerardo Boldiero

having of late narrated a piteous story in the presence of a worshipful company and I having already committed to writing a goodly number of such novels, I have bethought me to add this to the others and to give it, according to my wonted usance, a patron; wherefore I dedicate it unto your name. May it please you accept it in that spirit wherewith you are wont to accept and defend the interests of such clients as recur to your effectual and loyal patronage; nor let any marvel that I make bold to send these my toys to a man much occupied with public business and with the momentous affairs of so vast a realm; inasmuch as I do this not to the intent that you, neglecting the matters which you have all day long in hand, should waste the precious hours in the reading of this novel; nay, had I such an intent, I were indeed fond and deserving of severe reprehension; but I have been moved thereto of my knowledge that human nature should not nor can labour without cease and apply itself to the contemplation of the most noble sciences nor abide long in speculation anent things natural and celestial, without bytimes taking some relaxation of mind. Scaevola, a most eminent jurisconsult among the Romans, after he had made an end of matters of religion and had ordered the ceremonies and debated of the civil law and decided such suits as he had in hand, was wont, to solace his wearied mind and to render himself livelier and apter unto study, to exercise himself in the game of tennis and eke played often at tables and passed in other pleasant and lowly sports such little leisure as the vacation of the courts vouchsafed him, showing himself Scaevola in grave and important affairs and in matters of relaxation a man like other men. What shall we say of the wise Socrates, to whom no kind of knowledge was obscure and who

was one of the best-bred men of his time? It was oftentimes his usance, whenas he returned home after his disputations in the schools of philosophy, to play with his little children at those games which are common to childhood. Scipio Africanus, a man without peer in his time, whose splendid deeds of arms and the integrity of whose life the Greeks and Latins have celebrated in a thousand volumes, nowise disdained to disport himself, in company with Lælius, his most trusted friend, upon the sea-shore of Gaeta and of the city of Laurentum and to go gathering stones and shells among the fine sand. But, an I sought to adduce other instances to this purpose of men illustrious in every kind of action, time would fail me rather than examples. It is not, then, forbidden unto whatsoever man bytimes to unbend his mind from matters serious and to stoop to pleasant sports for his recreation and for the solacement and fortification of the mind, so it may after avail more vivaciously to resume the burthen of affairs, full as they are (some more and some less, according to circumstances,) of care and anxiety. You, then, my lord, whenas, wearied of your graver occupations, you would fain take a little recreation, may peradventure read this my novel by way of pastime. Fare you well and be mindful of me. May our Lord God prosper your thoughts.

The Three-and-Thirtieth Story.

GERARDO SECRETLY TAKETH HIS MISTRESS TO WIFE AND GOETH TO BARUTI. MEANWHILE THE DAMSEL'S FATHER SEEKETH TO MARRY HER AND SHE, SWOONING FOR DOLOUR, IS ENTOMBED FOR DEAD; BUT HER TRUE HUSBAND RETURNETH THAT SAME DAY AND TAKING HER FORTH OF THE SEPULCHRE, PERCEIVETH THAT SHE IS NOT DEAD; WHEREUPON HE TENDETH HER AND AFTER FORMALLY CELEBRATETH HIS NUPTIALS WITH HER.

It hath to-day, most lovesome ladies and you, courteous youths, been spoken at length of the great variety of chances which are wont, often beyond all human foresight, to betide in amorous emprises and how, when a man hath lost all hope of compassing that which he most ardently desireth, it is oftentimes found that hope is requickened and that which was mourned for lost is suddenly regained. And indeed these same chances are mostwhiles exceeding marvellous unto whoso perpendeth them and very uneth of belief unto whoso considereth not the unstableness of sublunary things. Such an one, who held himself assured of seeing the much-desired end of his emprise, findeth himself of a sudden far therefrom and altogether deprived thereof. Another, after long and harassing fatigues, thinketh

to have toiled in vain, but, what while his mind doffeth its first desire and turneth aside into another way, behold, the thing of which he despaired falleth unexpectedly into his hand and he findeth himself in entire possession of that which he never thought to have. Thus doth blind fortune go oftentimes sporting in human affairs with the turns of her inconstant wheel, and changeful and unstable as she is in all her dealings, in love-matters it is that we see her most inconstant. But, for that, according to the trite saying, examples are far more effectual than words and give indubitable assurance of that which is alleged, it pleaseth me, in corroboration thereof, to recount to you an adventure which befell in the famous city of Venice and which may to this day be seen recorded in the archives of the august tribunal of the Counsellors¹ of the Commonweal.

You must know, then, that in the city aforesaid there abode two gentlemen who were abundantly endowed with the goods of fortune and had their palaces upon the Grand Canal, well-nigh overagainst one another. One of them was called Messer Paolo and had a wife, with one daughter and one son only, which latter was named Gerardo; the other was called Messer Pietro and had no child of his wife save one only daughter of thirteen to fourteen years old, Elena by name, who was fair beyond all belief and who, as she grew in age, waxed marvellously day by day in grace and beauty. Gerardo, who was about twenty years old, held a strait amorous commerce with a barber's wife, who was very well favoured and agreeable and to visit whom he well-nigh every day took gondola with his serving-man and crossed the canal, entering a smaller canal, which flowed by the palace of Elena's father, and passing, on

¹ *Avvogadori.*

his wonted journey, under Messer Pietro's windows. It chanced (even as misfortunes use oftentimes to happen, whenas they are least expected,) that Elena's mother fell sick and in a brief space of time died, to the exceeding grief of her husband and only daughter. Now on the other side of the little canal, overagainst Messer Pietro, dwelt a gentleman and his wife, with four daughters, and Messer Pietro, one festival-day, some weeks after his wife's death, thinking to cheer his daughter with sortable company, sent the nurse whom he kept in the house and who had suckled the latter, to pray the father of the four damsels suffer his daughters come divert themselves with Elena ; to which the courteous gentleman consented, and so well-nigh every holiday the four sisters repaired very willingly and easily to Elena's house, inasmuch as, without being seen, they embarked at their own water-gate and crossing the little canal, landed at that of Messer Pietro's house, which was overagainst their own. The five damsels, when they were together, diverted themselves with divers sports befitting their sex and age, and amongst the rest they played at forfeits ; to wit, they played with a ball which they threw one to another and whoso failed to catch it in the air and let it fall to the ground was understood to have made default and lost the game. The four sisters were from seventeen to twenty or one-and-twenty years of age and were each enamoured of some young man ; wherefore oftentimes, as they played, now one, now another, nay, oftentimes three or all four at once, would run to the balconies, to see their lovers and others who passed in gondolas along the canal ; the which no little displeased Elena, who was very simple and had never yet felt the amorous flames, and she was sore chagrined thereat, pulling them back by the clothes to the wonted game. They, to whom the

sight of their lovers afforded much more delight than the ball, recked little of Elena, but abode still fast at the windows and cast whiles flowers or the like trifles, according to the season, to their gallants, whenas they passed under the balconies ; and one day, one of the four sisters, being importuned by Elena, because she would not remove from the balcony, said to her, “ By Christ His Cross, Elena, didst thou but taste a particle of the pleasure that we feel in diverting ourselves here at these windows, thou wouldst abide here as gladly as we and wouldst reckon no whit of forfeits ; but thou art a silly lass and knowest nought as yet of this traffic.” Elena, however, paid no heed to aught that was said to her, but still persisted in calling them back to the game and importuning them on childish wise.

It chanced one holiday that the four sisters, hindered by other occasions, could not come play with Elena ; wherefore she abode sad and melancholy and posting herself at one of the windows, overagainst their house on the other side of the little canal, sat there all solitary and disconsolate at not being with her friends, as she was used to be at these times. What while the simple girl abode on this wise, it befell that Gerardo, passing with his boat on his way to visit the barber’s wife, espied the damsel at a window and cast a chance look at her ; which she seeing, turned towards him and fell to gazing upon him with a blithe countenance, such as she had sundry whiles seen her friends show their lovers. Gerardo, marveling at this, (for that belike he had never before seen her nor taken heed to her) ogled her amorously and she, thinking that to do thus was part of the game, smilingly returned his glances. However, he passed on nor had gone far when the boatman said to him, “ Master mine, saw you yonder fair damsel and did you note how she ogled you with blithe

semblants and courteous greetings? By St. Zachary his Evangels, meseemeth she is anotherguess morsel and far daintier than the barberess! I warrant me she would give you a merry night and an ill sleep." Gerardo feigned not to have noted her and said to the man, "I would fain see who she is and if she be such as thou sayest; turn the gondola round and go slowly close under the house." Elena had not left the balcony, where she had been seen of the young man, who, faring on softly with his barge uncovered,¹ fell to looking upon her with a blithe visage and ogled her wantonly out of the corner of his eye; whereupon she took out a fine clove gillyflower, which she chanced to have at her ear, and as the gondola came under the balcony, let the fair and fragrant blossom fall as near the young man as she might.

Gerardo, beyond measure rejoiced at such a chance, took the sweet flower and making a seemly obeisance to the damsel, kissed it joyously again and again. Its fragrance and Elena's beauty took such possession of his heart that every other ardour which burned therein was in a trice extinguished and the flames of love for the fair damsel enkindled him with such might that it was nowise possible to him to abate them in the least particular, far less to quench them; wherefore, burning with a new fire, he altogether forewent his commerce with the barberess and gave himself wholly up to the charming girl. But she, being very simple and having not yet opened her breast to the amorous shafts, saw Gerardo indeed with pleasure, whenas he passed before her window, but regarded him neither more nor less than as if the looking one at other were a game. The enamoured youth fell to passing that way daily,

¹ *i.e.* with the head of the cabin thrown open.

nay, five or six times a day, but never chanced to see Elena save on holidays, for that the girl, love being as yet unawakened in her, accounted workadays unapt unto her sport. Gerardo, being passionately in love, abode exceeding discontent, finding no way to see his mistress, still less with words or letters to discover to her his love, and so burned and longed in vain. Whenas, indeed, he saw her on holidays, he strove as best he might to discover to her, by means of gestures, the flames that so cruelly consumed him ; but she understood little of such signs. Nevertheless, in the long run, she came to take no little pleasure in his sight and would fain have had him show himself twenty times an hour, but only on holidays ; wherefore, not to be hindered of her companions and taking more pleasure in Gerardo's sight than in the game of forfeits, she began, now with one excuse, now with another, to rid herself of the four sisters' company.

Things being at this pass, it chanced one day that the disconsolate lover, passing along the footway or fundament,¹ as it is used to say at Venice, saw Elena's nurse (who had aforetime been his own) knock at the door of the damsel's house ; whereupon he, being somewhat afar from her, fell to calling her and crying, "Nurse ! Nurse !" But she, for the knocking she made at the door, heard nothing and the door being presently opened, she entered in. The young man made haste to overtake her, ere she entered the house, calling her the while, and she, thinking to shut the door and turning round, saw him coming ; whereupon, she forbearing to shut the door and Gerardo, who came up incontinent, reaching the threshold, he saw Elena,

¹ *Fondamento*, i.e. the narrow paved footway between the houses and the canals.

who had come down on some occasion or other, in the courtyard. Whether it was of the excessive joy he had in seeing himself near her or whatever was the cause thereof, he was overcome with such oppression that he fell to the ground senseless and waxed so pale in the face that he seemed a dead body. At this dismal and unlooked-for sight the nurse and Elena and a serving-maid who was with the latter were all aghast and began to call for help; whilst the damsel, drawn by I know not what, cast herself weeping upon the youth; but the prudent nurse made her arise forthright and enter a midstair chamber, what while she busied herself with Gerardo, shaking and chafing him and calling him by name; then, seeing that he answered nothing, she, with the help of the maid, drew him within and shut the door. Now she loved the swooned youth, having fostered him with her own milk, and was inexpressibly afflicted at that which had befallen him. Accordingly, she wept sore and Messer Pietro, being at home and hearing the sobs and lamentations of the woebegone nurse, ran down, with others of the household, and would e'en know what was to do. The nurse acquainted him with that which had happened and he, being a courteous and pitiful gentleman, let softly take up the young man and carry him aloft, laying him on a rich bed; then, having used all fatherly diligence in seeking to recover him and seeing that no remedy availed, he bethought himself to have him carried to the house of his father, Messer Paolo. Accordingly, he laid him in a gondola and let carry him across the canal, sending with him the nurse and a discreet messenger, to advertise his father how the case had befallen.

Messer Paolo, learning what had chanced and seeing his son as he were dead, was overcome with extreme anguish and was like to swoon away himself. What tears he shed

and what piteous lamentations he made, let each one think who should see a very dear son in such a plight ; more by token that, although he had a daughter already married, nevertheless he accounted Gerardo his only child and loved him supremely. Accordingly, amid the general lamentation of his father and mother and all the household, the afflicted youth was carried to his chamber and laid abed, whilst divers physicians and an apothecary of repute, being fetched, applied themselves with all diligence to recall, by various means, the strayed vital spirits, which sought to forsake him, and wrought to such effect that, after many pains, Gerardo began to breathe again and recover his senses little by little. As soon as he availed to unknot his tongue, he faltered out, "Nurse ! Nurse !" and she, being there, answered him, saying, "Here am I, my son ; what wilt thou ?" The young man, being not yet altogether restored to himself and belike still imagining himself in act to run after her, still called her ; however, presently, perceiving where he was and seeing his father and mother, together with his sister and her husband and other kinsfolk and friends, who had been summoned, round about the bed nor knowing for what reason, (since he remembered him not of that which had betided him,) he had yet understanding enough to see that the place was unapt to bespeak the nurse of that which he would fain discover to her. Accordingly, entering upon other talk, he declared that there irked him nothing more, which filled all his folk with incredible pleasure ; and being asked of his father and the physicians what it was that had so affected him and had taken him out of himself, he replied that he knew not.

Then, all having avoided the chamber and leaving him alone with the nurse, he turned piteously to her and heaving sundry ardent sighs, bespoke her on this wise, saying, "You

may lightly apprehend, sweetest mother mine, from the sore accident which hath befallen me, at what a pass I find myself; for that, in truth, except I find succour, my life will speedily have a bitter end. Nor know I whither to turn for aid, save to you alone, in whose hands I manifestly know my death and life to be. You alone can, an you will, afford me such aid as will suffice to keep me alive; but, an you deny me your succour, you will without fail bereave me of life and become my murderess." The loving and pitiful nurse exhorted the afflicted Gerardo to be of good heart and apply himself to recover his lost strength, professing herself most ready to serve him with all her heart in all that might be done by her and freely promising him that she would do her every endeavour to aid him nor would ever tire in his service. The young man, hearing these lavish promises, took heart again and rendered her such warmest thanks as he might for that her kind and generous intent. Then, falling anew to praying and conjuring her as most strenuously he might, he recounted to her the strange circumstance of his love, inasmuch as he knew not his mistress's name [nor aught of her] save that she was one of the five whom he saw on holidays at the windows of Messer Pietro's house, now one at a time and now in company.

The nurse diligently hearkened to that which the young man told her and debating in herself who the damsel was, with the love of whom he was so sore inflamed, held her to be for certain one of Elena's playmates, inasmuch as she knew them for forward and sprightly; for of Elena, whom she knew to be simple and innocent, she might never have imagined the like. Gerardo was much heartened and comforted by the nurse's promise and abode all full of hope. Accordingly, they agreed that, on the first ensuing holiday,

the nurse should abide with the girls at the windows and be on the watch to see which of them was Gerardo's beloved, so she might, in due time and place, carry fowls¹ (as it is used to say) in his interest ; whilst he was on the same day to pass many times along the canal. This was on a Monday ; wherefore Gerardo, albeit he felt himself in good case, betook himself, at his father's instance, to an estate of theirs on the mainland, some six or seven miles distant from Venice, and there abode, diverting himself with various pleasures, till Friday morning, when he returned to Venice. The Sunday, so impatiently awaited by the lover and the nurse, being come, the four sisters gave Elena to understand that they had a mind to foregather with her, according to their usance ; but she,—who already began to be somewhat heated with love of the young man, having still, since his swooning, felt I know not what at heart and borne him great compassion, and who took pleasure in thinking of him and would fain have seen him again,—excused herself as best she might, alleging certain excuses of her fashion. And this she did, to the intent that if, as she hoped, her lover should pass, she might not be hindered of any from viewing him at her leisure.

The nurse, understanding that the sisters were not to come play with Elena, was mightily chagrined, unknowing how she might avail to satisfy Gerardo ; but, seeing that the girl, after dinner, might not abide still and ran a thousand times an hour to the windows, she began to misdoubt her she was enamoured of some young man, and the better to certify herself of the fact, said that she had a mind to sleep awhile ; the which pleased Elena, as leaving her a free field to abide at the windows, and she lovingly exhorted

¹ *Portar polli*, i.e. to carry love-letters, play the go-between. Cf. French "poulets."

her to take rest. Then, when she saw the nurse withdrawn into one chamber, she forthright betook herself to another, to begin her desired amorous game; wherein fortune was very favourable to her, inasmuch as scarce had she posted herself at the window when Gerardo, who was nowise asleep, but most watchful over his affair, showed himself on the little canal. Now the shrewd nurse had also stationed herself at a window and seeing the young man appear in his gondola, turned her eyes to where Elena was, who was all rejoiced at the sight of her lover and showed by certain girlish gestures as she would fain give him joy of his recovered health. She had in her hand a bunch of flowers and this, as the gondola passed below her, she with a blithe countenance threw to the young man. The nurse, seeing this, doubted not but that Gerardo's beloved was Elena; wherefore, knowing that a match between them might very fitly be made, and they were minded to marry each other, she entered Elena's chamber of a sudden and finding her still at the window, gazing upon her lover, said to her, "Tell me, daughter, what is this I saw thee do? What hast thou to do with the youth who passed but now along the canal? A fine, modest wench, indeed, to abide all day at the windows and cast bunches of flowers to whoso cometh and goeth! Woe to thee, should thy father hear of it! I warrant me he would dight thee on such wise that thou wouldest envy the dead."

The girl, well-nigh beside herself for this severe rebuke, knew not neither dared to say a word; however, seeing from the nurse's face that, though she chid her sharply, she was not withal very angry, she cast her arms about her neck and kissing her on childish wise, bespoke her with soft and coaxing words, saying, "Nannie,"¹ (for so do the Venetians

¹ *Nena*.

call their nurses) “sweetest mother mine, I crave you humbly pardon if I have been at fault (which I believe not) in the game you have presently seen me play. But, an you would have me live merry, may it please you hearken a little to what I have to say ; and after, an it seem to you that I have erred in playing, give me such chastisement therefor as you think fit. Know that on holidays my lord father letteth the four sisters who dwell overagainst us come hither, so we may divert ourselves in company and play together. They first taught me the game of forfeits and after told me that a much more delectable game was to go to the windows and whenas young men pass through the canal in gondolas, to play with them by casting them roses, gillyflowers and the like toys ; the which greatly pleased me and of all the others I elected to play with him whom you saw but now. I for my part would have him pass here often and meknoweth not why you should go about to rebuke me for such a play ; algates, an there be any wrong in it, I will abstain therefrom.”

The nurse could not contain her laughter, hearing how simply and without any malice the girl spoke and bethought herself to bring to a good issue the emprise begun in sport ; wherefore she replied to Elena on this wise, saying, “Dearest daughter mine, I will have thee know that I suckled with my milk the young man who passed but now and who is called Gerardo. He is the son of Messer Paolo, who hath yonder goodly and commodious palace on the other side of the Grand Canal, and I abode in his house more than two years ; nay, I love him as a son and have still been a familiar of his house and am well seen and caressed of all. Wherefore I desire his weal, honour and advantage no less than mine own ; even as also I desire thine every contentment and would still weary myself for thee and for

him as much as for any one I know." Therewithal, she went on to make the girl aware of the snares that underlie the amorous play and how simple lasses and other women abide oftentimes cozened and flouted of men, and showed her how much it behoved every woman, of what degree soever she might be, to treasure her honour and preserve it with all care and diligence. Ultimately, to come to her intent, when she had shown her many other things, she told her that, if she had a mind to terminate that her amorous game (since game she called it) on honourable wise, she would engage to do so featly that she should become the wife of her Gerardo. The girl, though simple and innocent, was nevertheless quick of wit and throughly apprehended all that the nurse said to her; wherefore the love she bore Gerardo awakening in her and gathering strength, she replied that she was content to take him for her husband, rather than whatsoever other gentleman in Venice.

The nurse, having gotten this favourable reply, took her opportunity to go visit the enamoured youth, who abode betwixt hope and fear; but, when he saw her come in to him with a blithe visage, he augured of good and doubted not to compass his intent; wherefore he received her with warm and loving greetings, saying, "Welcome, sweetest mother mine; what good news do you bring me?" And she, "I bring thee the best of news, my son, an it fail not for thee." Then, beginning from the beginning, she told him all that had passed betwixt Elena and herself and concluded by assuring him that, whenassoever he would have her to wife, the damsel was most ready to take him to husband. Gerardo, who loved the girl most ardently, was mighty well contented to take her for his lawful wife, more by token that he knew her to be Messer Pietro's

only child. Accordingly, he thanked the nurse as best he might and they proceeded to take order together of the means and time of foregathering with Elena, so they might make a happy and goodly end of the much-desired nuptials; which done, the nurse returned home. Meanwhile Elena, who had never proved love, but yet felt awaken in her I know not what, which at once softly burned her and stung her, at the thought that she should ere long be the wife of her dear Gerardo, could find no place to contain her, being spurred by the desire of playing a game with her lover, whereof she knew not yet what manner thing it was, albeit she imagined it most delectable. On the other hand, the thought of doing this without her father's knowledge and license dismayed her and made her blood run cold and she feared lest some great scandal should ensue thereof. So, torn by conflicting thoughts, she travailed, now hoping, now fearing, now saying in herself, "Shall I be so bold, nay, I might rather say so foolhardy, as to presume to do such a thing in secret?" And anon banishing that thought, "Nay," quoth she, "should I not do everything, so but I may still sport joyously with my Gerardo?" And so she went variously conjecturing and debating in herself, but concluded in the end to seek to espouse her lover, ensue thereof what might. Accordingly, understanding from her dear nurse her lover's goodly disposition, she abode exceeding content; then, after debating various devices, they agreed to hold a great washing one day, at an hour whenas Messer Pietro was abroad, and set all the serving-women awork, so Gerardo might enter without hindrance; and of this determination he was advised by the sagacious nurse.

The appointed time come and Messer Pietro being at the Senate, the nurse and Elena set all the women of the

house awork upon the washing and held them so busy therewith that Gerardo, coming to the house and softly pushing the door, which he found open, entered in and without being seen of any, mounted the stairs and betook himself to a chamber which the nurse had appointed him. There he abode the coming of the latter, who tarried not long ere she came and carried him by a little secret stair to the chamber where Elena awaited him. The simple and timid girl trembled and overcome with icy fears, which bathed all her limbs in cold sweat, stirred not nor knew what to say. Gerardo, on like wise, full of excessive joy and scarce able to contain himself, abode awhile without availing to utter a word; then, recovering himself and unknotting his tongue, he saluted her with due reverence and trembling voice; whereupon she answered him all shamefastly that he was welcome. The nurse, seeing the two lovers abide silent, said to them, smiling, "Meseemeth you have a mind to play the mute; but, since each of you knoweth why you are come hither, we were better lose no time, inasmuch as meseemeth well that honourable accomplishment be given to your desire. Here at the head of this bed is the image and presentment of the glorious queen of heaven, with her son, our Saviour, in her arms, whom I pray, as should you also, to give a good beginning, a better middle and a best ending to the marriage which you are about to contract by word of mouth." With this, she spoke the goodly words which are wont, according to the laudable usance of the Roman Catholic Church, to be used in such espousals; whereupon Gerardo gave his dear Elena the ring and you may picture to yourselves the joy of the newly-wedded pair. The nurse, seeing the thing brought to a good issue, exhorted them to divert themselves together, since they had commodity thereof; then, departing the

chamber, she left the champions in the lists and went below whereas the washing was toward. What the newly-wedded pair did, shut in the chamber, I might not tell you, since there were no witnesses there ; but there is none here but may imagine it as it was, judging by himself, if he had found himself in the like case.

After awhile, the nurse, herseeming the combatants had abidden long enough together, returned to their chamber and finding them not indeed yet sated, though peradventure weary, entered into various talk and mirthful discourse for the enhancement of their merry cheer ; then, order being taken for the future, so they might foregather without peril till the occasion should come to discover the marriage contracted and consummated between them, Gerardo, after many sweetest kisses, departed the chamber and with the aid and escort of the sagacious nurse, made his way out of the house, without being seen, scarce able to contain himself for the sovereign allegresse which possessed him. Elena abode woebegone for the departure of her bridegroom, but was else as gladsome as can be said, holding herself the happiest woman in Venice and blessing the hour and the moment when she first saw Gerardo. But what shall we say of the wonder-working might of Love? The which, if, entering Cimon's¹ breast, it in a trice, from a rude, ignorant and savage, not man, but brute as he was, rendered him accort, quick-witted, gentle, discreet and urbane, wrought on like wise with Elena ; for that, whenas she began to taste the amorous disport and to feel her heart warmed and enkindled of love's divine flames, the eyes of her understanding were suddenly opened and she became so sprightly, quick-witted, shrewd and engaging that she

¹ See my "Decameron of Boccaccio," Day V. Story 1.

had few equals and no superior in Venice for grace, beauty and womanly wit; nay, her qualities waxed daily goodlier and greater. Gerardo, growing hourly happier, with the aid of the wily nurse, went by night to lie with his dear wife, whensoever he might, and both gave themselves the goodliest time and led the gladsomest life in the world. But, what while the two lovers thus blithely enjoyed each other, untoward fortune, which never leaveth any (and especially lovers) overlong in peace, prepared unto Gerardo and Elena a strange disturbance and impeachment, to the end that, if they had lived together most happily some two years, they should e'en begin to taste the bitter gall of mischance, the which she is so apt of a sudden to mingle with the goodliest sweets of life.

It was the yearly usance of the Venetian Seigniority to despatch sundry galleys to Baruti¹ and of this their intent to make public proclamation beforehand, so that those who had a mind to such a voyage might, by making certain payments to the Commonwealth, take such of the said galleys as pleased them. Now Messer Paolo, Gerardo's father, desirous, as good fathers generally are, that his son should begin to use himself to traffic and merchandry and make himself acquainted with the affairs and fashions of the city, agreed upon a price and took one of the said galleys in Gerardo's name, without saying aught thereof to the latter. He chanced to have in the house a good quantity of wares for Baruti and would fain have his son carry them thither and bring back other merchandise for Venice, thinking thus to add no little to his substance and after to give Gerardo a wife and leaving to him the whole care of the household matters, devote himself solely

¹ Apparently Beirout in Syria.

to the affairs of the Seigniory. Having, then, agreed, as hath been said, for the galley, Messer Paolo came home and after dinner, the tables being removed and he left alone with his son, he, after some [indifferent] talk, thus bespoke Gerardo, saying, "Thou knowest, my son, the goods which we have in store to send to Baruti, to exchange for such wares as are in demand here and have a good despatch ;¹ wherefore I have this morning hired a galleon in thy name, so thou mayst go see the world and begin henceforth honourably to exercise thyself and make thyself a practical man ;² for that there is nothing which lightlier rendereth a man quickwitted and awakeneth his understanding than to see foreign cities and countries and the manners and customs of this nation and that. Nay, thou seest daily in this our city that those who have conversed abroad, in the Levant, in the Ponent and in other parts, whenas after they return home, if they have managed their affairs well and bear the name of men of quick wit, practised and apt for matters of importance, thou seest, I say, that such men are elected to divers magistracies and offices of the Republic. The which betideth not of those who reckon of no other what than to abide all day long idle and consort with women of loose life. The voyage to Baruti commonly lasteth six months or seven at the most. Wherefore, dear my son, take order of that which behoveth unto thee therefor, for I will provide thee with all ; and on thy return, we will make such disposition of our affairs as God shall put it into our hearts to do."

Messer Paolo looked for his son to answer blithely that he was ready to do his bidding, himseeming he had put in his hands a voyage no less honourable than useful ; but Gerardo, to whom it seemed impossible to live a day apart

¹ *Buono spaccio*, i.e. a ready sale.

² Sic (*uomo pratico*).

from his mistress, was sore troubled in his mind, albeit he gave no outward sign of the chagrin and despite which possessed him, and abode without saying a word. Whereupon, "Thou answerest me not," quoth his father and he, "I know not what to say, inasmuch as I would fain obey you, but it is impossible to me to do what you wish, for that sea-travel is to me exceeding irksome and contrary; nay, did I go a-seafaring, it would seem to me I ran voluntarily upon my manifest death; wherefore may it please you pardon me and accept my just excuse, albeit it most certainly grieveth me not to be able to obey you." Messer Paolo, who never thought to have such a reply, abode full of wonderment and chagrin and addressed himself anew to persuade him, essaying him both with soft words and sharp; but he wearied himself in vain nor could get of him other than the first answer; and so, arising from table in disaccord, they went, one hither and the other thither. The father, beyond measure chagrined at that which had befallen, repaired to the Rialto and seeking out his son-in-law, a rich and noble young man, said to him, after much discourse, "Lionardo," for such was the other's name, "I had chartered a galleon to send Gerardo to Baruti with certain goods which I have; but, when I bespoke him thereof, he alleged me certain excuses of his fashion, wherefor he giveth me to understand that he cannot go thither. Now, an thou have a mind to go in his stead, there is no occasion for many words between thee and me; suffice it to say that I will appoint thee such part of the gain as thou wilt." Lionardo warmly thanked his father-in-law and declared himself ready to do whatsoever pleased him; wherefore they came to an accord forthright.

Gerardo, on his side, awaited the coming night and made Elena the accustomed signal of his desire [to be with her].

Then, the appointed hour come, he entered the house and made his way to his wife's chamber, where, after the due greetings and the wonted embraces and kisses, they sat down and Gerardo said to Elena, "Wife mine, dearer to me than my proper life, you marvel belike that I have made so great a point of coming to visit you to-day, having been with you last night; but, over and above my desire to be continually here with you, which you may lightly have perceived, another reason hath presently brought me hither;" and with that he told her all that had passed between himself and his father. Elena, whose breeding and intelligence far overpassed her tender age, hearkened to her husband's words; then, seeing his speech to be ended, she thus, after a piteous sigh, replied to him, saying, "Woe's me, husband mine, if I knew not the greatness of your love for me otherwise than by this that you now tell me and the most poignant wound which you presently deal me! For that, in refusing to obey your father, you shut against me every way by which I may ever hope to be happy." Thereupon her voice was broken with grievous and woeful sobs and she gave herself up to weeping without stint; then, the tears she shed having somewhat assuaged the bitterness of her chagrin, she regained a little breath and thus, still weeping bitterly, bespoke her husband, saying, "Alack, dear my life, how grievously you have erred in not promptly obeying your father! Alas, wretched, more than thrice wretched me, since, being as yet unknown, nay, even unseen [of him], I am the cause of such hurt, such dishonour and such sharp affliction to my honoured father-in-law! Will he not, whenas he knoweth me, have just cause to love me little? Will he not say that I am the discomfort, nay, what is of more import, the manifest ruin of his house? Certes, he may well say it. I beseech you,

then, (and let my prayers, an you love me, as I am fain to believe you love me, avail a thousandfold,) at any cost to obey your father and patiently to endure this few months' absence from my sight. Wherefore, dear my husband, get you gone happy, mindful of me as I shall be of you, for that I shall still go following you in thought whithersoever you fare, as she who eternally desireth to live and die yours. Nay, God forbid that I should anywise be the occasion of your abiding with your father otherwise than in that peace and concord which behoveth unto both !”

There were many other words said, but in the end Gerardo suffered himself to be overcome by the true arguments of the sage and prudent damsel and at the wonted hour, taking leave of her with many tears, he went to do his occasions. He presently sat down to table with his disconsolate father and after dinner, he rose to his feet and falling on his knees before Messer Paolo, with uncovered head, bespoke him on this wise, saying, “Magnificent and honoured father, I have thought much this past night over the going to Baruti, whereof you bespoke me yesterday, and plainly perceive how grievous an error I made in not obeying your prayers, which should for me at every time and place have the effect of commandments ; wherefore, with all my heart I humbly crave your pardon of my ignorance and folly, praying you have no regard to the scant reverence I showed you, but to be pleased to restore me to your wonted favour. Behold, most reverend father mine, I am here ready to obey you and not only to sail to Baruti, but to go into every place whither it shall please you send me ; for that I am resolved rather to die than ever again to oppose myself to your wishes.” The affectionate father, hearing these words, willed his son arise and felt his eyes brim over with tears of love and tenderness, which with their lavish flow hindered

him on such wise that he could not avail to utter a word, but, clasping his son about the neck, abode a good while thus. The father's hot and loving tears moved the son to weep likewise for pity and affection ; nevertheless, taking somewhat of breath and drying his eyes, he left weeping and fell to comforting his father with dulcet words. Messer Paolo, then, putting an end to his tears and full of immense gladness, determined to send for his son-in-law and procure his consent to let Gerardo go, against he should provide him with another voyage. Accordingly, Lionardo came and his father-in-law, discovering to him the joy he felt in that his son had consented to make the voyage to Baruti, instantly prayed him be pleased for the nonce to abide at home, for that he would provide him at the first commodity, as in effect he did a little after. This was unwelcome news to Lionardo, who much loved to make that voyage ; algates, like a prudent youth as he was, he dissembled his chagrin and answered his father-in-law that he was content with that which pleased him and that, to oblige him and his brother-in-law, he was ready to do much more than this. Messer Paolo and Gerardo thanked him amain for his goodwill and applied themselves to the embarkation of the goods and the equipment of the galleon with all that was necessary.

But whoso should offer to tell the story of the few nights which passed between Gerardo's determination to go and the day of his departure, the amorous pleasures taken by the lovers and the tears shed at their last leavetaking, would have enough to do ; for that belike those which the disconsolate Fiammetta allegeth to have shed for Pamfilo¹

¹ Referring to Boccaccio's opuscle, "*L'Ellégia di Madonna Fiammetta.*"

were not so many as those of Gerardo and Elena. I will, then, leave whoso truly loveth, or hath loved, to imagine how it would be with him, if he found himself in the like case. The time of departure come, the sailors cast off the galleon's moorings and set out on their voyage with a fair wind. If Gerardo, as he sailed, had still his every thought fixed upon his dearly loved wife, she did on like wise; but she had this consolation that she spoke with her faithful nurse of her dear husband and if bytimes she fell into any doubt of his love, the good woman comforted her and certified her that Gerardo loved none other woman than herself; the which was not the case with Gerardo, who felt his passion wax fiercer, the closelier he kept his flame shut in his breast. He had none to whom he might vent his amorous troubles, having never chanced to make any one a confidant of that his love. But now let us leave him go his voyage, and we will after bring him home again in safety.

Some six months having passed since Gerardo's departure, Elena, who counted the hours, the days, the weeks and the months, abode in expectation of her dear husband's return and was all rejoiced thereat, herseeming each hour was a thousand years that he tarried and would say to her trusty nurse, "But fifteen, or at the most, twenty days more and my much-desired husband will be in Venice. He will, besides the merchandise, bring a thousand goodly things, and he told me at parting that he meant to bring you store of precious gifts." On this wise the amorous damsel went comforting herself, unknowing that a plot was hatching against her, which would be to her a cause of extreme dolour and infinite melancholy. Her father, seeing his daughter grown engaging and quickwitted beyond her age, as well as out of measure fair, and bethinking him that she

had no sufficient female governance at home, determined, of his fears lest somewhat should befall her against his wish (the which indeed had already happened), to marry her; nor had he far to go to find a fitting son-in-law, for that, he being rich and noble and his daughter very fair and lovesome, many of his own quality had gladly allied themselves to him by marriage. Accordingly, he chose out, from amongst others, a young man who most pleased him in the matter of wealth and noble family and agreed with him, by means of common friends and kinsfolk, that he should see Elena that next Saturday and that, if she pleased him, he should on the ensuing Sunday give her the ring and after consummate the marriage that same night. This settled, Messer Pietro began to make great preparations for the coming nuptials and notified his daughter of the match he had concluded for her. At this heavy and unexpected news (which was as grievous to Elena as if it had been said to her, "To-morrow the Seigniori purposeth to let hang thee in St. Mark's Place, between the two high columns,") she became beyond measure woeful and overcome with unendurable dolour, could answer her father nothing; the which he, suspecting nothing, ascribed to girlish shamefastness and said no more to her, but proceeded to order that which behoved to be done, so the nuptials might be sumptuously celebrated with goodly ordinance and delicate viands, as becomed unto his own wealth and quality and those of his son-in-law.

On the Saturday evening, Elena, having been seen of the young man and having pleased him, supped little or nothing and withdrawing to her chamber with the nurse, began to make the woefullest lamentation that can be conceived; nor might the nurse anywise avail to comfort her, for that she could think of no means or device whereby she might

eschew being on the morrow wedded and put to bed to her new husband ; the which, come what would, she was resolved never to suffer. Discover to her father that she was already married she dared not, not for dread lest he should deal cruelly with her, for that she had gladly died ; but because she feared, by divulging the marriage contracted, to harm her Gerardo. Nay, she was like that night to leave the house, with the nurse's aid, and go seek her father-in-law, and throwing herself into his arms, acquaint him with that which had passed between Gerardo and herself, but knew not if this would please her husband. Now whoso should offer to recount, one by one, the thoughts which passed through her mind that night might as easily number the stars anights, whenas the heavens are serenest and thickest studded withal ; but you may well conceive that her sufferings were incredible and inexpressible. All that night, then, the wretched and disconsolate Elena travailed and laboured, without ever availing to take rest.

The new day come, the nurse, going forth the chamber, addressed herself to do those offices about the house which pertained unto her, still racking her brains anent the despairful damsel's case and unable to devise aught which might avail to deliver her, and indeed her affliction was no less than that of Elena. The latter, who had not undone herself all that night, finding herself alone and assailed with strange and sinister thoughts, locked the chamber-door from within and mounting her bed, clad as she was, composed her garments about her as most decently she might ; then, collecting all her thoughts in one, she resolved in herself, for that she knew not when Gerardo should return and her heart suffered her not to espouse him whom her father proposed to her, to live no longer. Accordingly, having no poison at hand and lacking the heart to strangle herself

or kill herself by means of steel, she gathered herself straitly together and held her breath as most she knew and might, so that, oppressed as she was, to boot, with grief, she presently swooned away and abode as if dead ; and there being none to afford her aid, her dismayed vital spirits, straying at their will, well-nigh forsook her altogether.

The hour of rising come, the nurse went to the chamber to cause Elena dress herself and finding the door bolted, knocked again and again as loudliest she might, but could get no answer. The noise she made aroused Messer Pietro, who, hearing this, came thither and after long knocking, let cast down the door by main force. Thereupon he entered the chamber and the windows being opened, all saw the hapless Elena lying clothed on her bed, as if dead. Great was the outcry which ensued and the wretched father, weeping piteously, sent up his woeful cries even to the heavens ; whilst the nurse cast herself upon the body, screaming and howling like one distraught, nor was there any in the house but wept sore. The physicians and the new bridegroom and his kinsfolk were sent for and many things were done and innumerable remedies essayed to bring Elena to her senses ; but all in vain. The nurse was straitly questioned and said that Elena had travailed sore that night and tossed from side to side, as she were sick of some most grievous fever, declaring that, when she herself left the chamber, the girl was awake ; but in secret she held it for certain that she had died suffocated with infinite dolour and wept most bitterly nor might anywise be comforted. The disconsolate father also wept sore and said things which would have moved stones to pity, much more men. The physicians, after trying a thousand remedies, seeing that nothing availed to recover the damsel, concluded that she

had died of apoplexy,¹ caused by a subtle catarrh, distilled from the head to the heart. Accordingly, she being of all holden for dead, it was appointed that she should that evening be honourably borne by her peers to the Patriarchate in Castello and there laid in the marble sepulchre of her forefathers, which stood without the church; and so the hapless damsel was entombed, with general mourning of all who knew her. Look you now what strange chances betide bytimes and consider how no joy may ever be complete but some sorrow will still be mingled withal and its honey tempered with so much wormwood that the sweetness of the pleasure may not be tasted. That same day Gerardo was to arrive at the sea-shore² near to Venice with his galleon, having so happily accomplished his voyage that he could have desired no more and returning very rich.

It is a laudable usance at Venice that, whenassoever ships or galleys return after a long voyage, especially when they have made an honourable despatch of their business, the friends and kinsfolk [of those aboard] go out to meet them and give them joy of their happy and prosperous return. Accordingly, many citizens, both young and old, went out to receive and rejoice in Gerardo, who came, glad beyond all others, not so much for that he returned rich and well despatched as that he looked to see again his dearest consort, by him loved and desired over all else, unknowing, poor wretch, that, at that same hour whenas he reached the land, sepulture was being given to her. The voyagers, then, arriving at the port between eleven and twelve of the

¹ *La goccia.*

² *Al lido*, i.e. at the Lido, the natural dyke which separates the Lagoons from the open sea.

night, what time an end was making of the unhappy Elena's funeral exequies, saw afar off the radiance of the lighted torches and enquired of those who came to meet them what was the meaning of so much light at that hour. Now amongst these latter were many young men, who knew the hapless case of the ill-fated Elena and told how the damsel had that same morning (which was to have been her wedding-day) been found dead in her chamber and that doubtless her kinsfolk were presently in act to bury her. At this woeful and piteous news there was none but was moved to compassion of the poor girl ; but Gerardo over all was so overcome with grief and anguish and felt himself so transpierced that it was a miracle he could contain his tears and forbear from discovering with piteous cries the inward dole which consumed him ; algates, he had such command over himself that he abode firm and disengaging himself as quickliest he might from his comrades of the galleon and those who came to do him honour and who presently returned to Venice, he determined nowise to survive his beloved Elena. He was convinced that the hapless damsel had poisoned herself, rather than espouse him whom her father would have given her to husband ; but, ere he poisoned himself or put an end to his days by other means, (being yet undetermined by what death he should die,) he resolved to go open the sepulchre where Elena lay and see her, dead as she was, and after abide dead by her side. Unknowing how he might alone avail to open the tomb, he bethought him to make a confidant of the boatswain of the galleon, who was his fast friend, and to discover to him the story of his love ; wherefore, calling him aside, he imparted to him that which had passed between Elena and himself and what he purposed to do, saying nothing of his wish to die. The boatswain dissuaded

him as most he might from seeking to open sepulchres, by reason of the scandals which might ensue thereof, but, seeing him fixed in his purpose, professed himself ready to do his every will and to share one same fortune with him.

Accordingly, they twain, without other company, took boat and leaving the care of the galleon to a man of their choice, betook them to Venice, where they alighted at the boatswain's house and there provided themselves with tools apt for their purpose; then, reembarking, they repaired to Castello to the Patriarchate. It was about midnight when they opened the sepulchre and propped up the lid; whereupon Gerardo entered the tomb and threw himself upon his wife's body, on such wise that whoso saw them had been ill able to discern whether of the twain more resembled a dead body. Then, presently recovering himself, he bathed his lady's face and mouth with bitter tears and covered them with kisses; what while the boatswain, who feared to be taken in the act by the officers of the watch, still called to him to come forth, but he could not bring himself to arise. However, being in the end enforced by his friend to depart, he was so beside himself that he would e'en, despite all the other could say, carry his wife with him, and accordingly lifting her up, they closed the tomb and bore the young lady to the boat. There Gerardo laid himself anew by his Elena's side and could not take his fill of clipping and kissing her; but, being sharply chidden of the boatswain for his folly in seeking to carry off the body, unknowing whither, he ultimately gave ear to his friend's true counsel and resolved to restore it to the tomb. They accordingly turned the boat's head anew towards the Patriarchate, but, by the way, Gerardo being unable to tear himself from his wife's embracements, himseemed he felt some motion in her, wherefore, "Dear my friend," quoth

lie to the boatswain, "I feel I know not what in her, which giveth me hope that she is not yet dead." The boatswain, bethinking him, by reason of the strange chances which oftentimes betide, that this might well be, laid his hand on the damsel's left breast and finding it yet warm and some slight fluttering of the heart, said to Gerardo, "Master, feel here and thou wilt find that she is not altogether dead."

At this happy announcement Gerardo, all joyful, laid his hand on her heart, whose motion momentarily increased, nature seeking to recall the strayed vital spirits, and said, "Truly, she is alive; what shall we do?" "We shall do well enough," replied the boatswain; "be of good heart and never fear but all necessary provision shall be made. We must nowise carry her back to the tomb; let us go to my house, which is not far distant. There I have my mother, who is a woman advanced in years and of good counsel." Accordingly they betook themselves to the boatswain's house and knocking hard at the door, were heard and the boatswain known, for that, the first time he came thither, his mother had heard nothing thereof. The good old woman, beyond measure rejoiced at her son's return, caused her maid kindle a light and open the door and the boatswain, embracing his mother, despatched the girl on certain errands, whilst he and Gerardo, unseen of her, carried Elena into a spacious chamber and laid her, unclad, in an excellent bed; where, kindling a fire and heating linen cloths, they fell to chafing and rubbing the damsel softly therewith nor gave over their labours till she began to recover her senses and returning to herself, uttered some half words with a faltering tongue. Then, opening her eyes and little by little recovering her sight, she recognized her Gerardo, but, being not yet fully

restored to herself, she knew not if she dreamed or if what she saw was true. Gerardo, seeing such evident signs of life, tenderly embraced and kissed his dearest wife, shedding hot tears the while for excess of joy ; but, when the damsel learned from her husband and the boatswain what had passed and how she had been entombed and brought forth of the sepulchre, she was like to swoon away anew for mingled fright and allegresse. Now, whoso should think to tell the joy and contentment of the two lovers would be much mistaken, for that indeed none might avail to express the thousandth part of their consummate bliss. Elena, being restored to herself, was fed with new-laid eggs, pistachios¹ and succades and with malmsey of great price. Then, the dawn drawing near, she was prayed of all to sleep and recruit herself somewhat with rest. Accordingly, she laid herself down to repose and having slept not that night and still less the night before, lightly fell asleep.

By this the new day was come, wherefore Gerardo, leaving Elena to repose, sent the boatswain back to the galleon and himself, taking a gondola, repaired to the house of his father, who, being already risen, embraced his son with the utmost joy. The glad and fortunate Gerardo briefly acquainted his father with all his prosperous voyage and how he had profited vastly by the sale of the merchandise carried to Baruti nor had gained less by that which he brought back ; wherewithal Messer Paolo was fully satisfied and blessed his son a thousand times. That morning he dined at home with his father and mother in all joy and gladness and after addressed himself for awhile to bring his

¹ *i.e.* a confection of pistachio-kernels, anciently considered a sovereign restorative.

galleon into Venice and to do what was necessary. He then went with the boatswain to visit his Elena, with whom he supped joyously and slept that night. On the morrow he took counsel with the faithful boatswain of that which was to do anent the damsel's governance and concluded, after much debate, that it would be far more for her commodity and honour that she should, against the marriage were made public, sojourn with Lionardo his brother-in-law. Accordingly, he went that day to dine with him and his sister and prayed them after dinner withdraw with him into a chamber apart, for that he had to speak with them in secret ; which being done, he bespoke them on this wise, saying, "Noble brother-in-law and thou, dearest sister, I have brought you hither for a matter which is of the greatest import to myself and which demandeth secrecy and aid ; and for that I know how you love me and that, to get a kindness of you, I have no need of these ceremonies which I should use, an I required any stranger of service, I will come to the fact." With this he recounted to them the whole story of his love, from beginning to end, and the dreadful chance which had befallen his wife. Moreover, he told them how he had sheltered the latter in the house of his boatswain and besought them to suffer him bring her to their house and entertain her till such time as the marriage should be made public, inasmuch as he knew not where he might for the present more honourably and securely bestow her than in their hands. Lionardo and his wife, hearing the strange and perilous adventure which had befallen their sister-in-law, abode full of extreme wonderment and themselves seemed Gerardo told them a fable ; but, being certified that the fact was as they had heard, they very readily accepted the charge of the young lady and embarking all three in a gondola, went to fetch Elena and carried her to Lionardo's

house. But what shall we say of the disconsolate nurse? She, knowing Gerardo to be returned, dared not present herself before him, such was her grief for the loss of her Elena.

There passed not many days after Gerardo's return ere his father began to bespeak him of his wish to marry him, but he still excused himself, saying that he was young and that it was not yet time to bind himself with the strait knot of matrimony, himseeming good and fitting to enjoy his youth in liberty, even as his father had done, who, when he married, was much older than he. Some days passed in these debates between father and son and Gerardo went well-nigh every night to enjoy his wife. Messer Paolo was ware that his son slept well-nigh always abroad and unknowing where, misdoubted him he had a commerce with some courtezan or other lewd woman, by reason whereof he recked not of marriage. To resolve himself of this suspicion and eke for that, being in effect an old man, he desired to see his son married, he one day called the latter to himself and bespoke him in these terms, saying, "Gerardo, I have many a time bespoken thee of giving thee a wife and thou hast still shown thyself unwilling to complease me. Now I would fain have the consolation of seeing thee married ere I die; wherefore tell me an thou have a mind to complease me or no, so I may resolve myself of that which I have to do. An thou wilt take a wife, I will comply with thee insomuch that thou mayst take her after thine own fashion, so but she be sortable unto thee; but, an thou wilt not, I swear to thee, by the Evangels of Saint Mark, that I will adopt one of the sons of Lionardo and my daughter to heir and will not leave thee a marklet of my substance." Gerardo, seeing his father disordered

in countenance and himseeming it was no longer time to keep that which he had done concealed, briefly related to him the manner of his marriage, the swooning of his wife and her recoverance. Messer Paolo heard his son's story like one adream and could not believe it ; but ultimately, seeing Gerardo steadfast in what he said, he declared that he would on the morrow, after dinner, certify himself of the truth with the sight of Elena and that, an the case were indeed thus, he was well pleased withal. Gerardo then craved his forgiveness for marrying without his leave, the which he lightly obtained from the affectionate father, and going that same day to visit his wife, acquainted her and his brother-in-law and sister with that which had passed between his father and himself.

On the morrow, after dinner, Messer Paolo and Gerardo, without other company, repaired, by the quayway, to Lionardo's house and knocked at the door, which was straightway opened to them. Hardly had they entered when Elena, hastily descending the stair, cast herself at her father-in-law's feet and weeping, craved him pardon if, being yet unknown of him, she had been to him an occasion of trouble or disquietude. The good old man, seeing his fairest daughter-in-law, wept for tenderness and raising her up, kissed her and blessed her and accepted her to his dearest daughter. They then mounted the stair and Messer Paolo abode a good while with his daughter and son-in-law nor might take his full of talking with Elena, himseeming in effect she was very engaging and discreet of speech and prompt in reply. Now a few days thence there was a very goodly festival to be holden at a neighbouring church ; wherefore he willed that the nuptials should be celebrated on that day and that Elena should be escorted thither to mass in rich array and after brought

home with honour. Accordingly, all being set in readiness, many ladies were invited and it was given them to understand that the bride was a foreigner. Moreover, Gerardo invited the boatswain, his confidant, and divers very noble gentlemen, all supposing that the bride was a stranger; and so, on the appointed day, they escorted her with great pomp and magnificence to the church aforesaid, where she was of all who saw her accounted the fairest damsel in Venice and was beholden of every one with no small marvel. As chance willed it, he, to whom Elena had been promised by her father to wife, was present at the mass, with a dear friend of his, who was with him when he went to see her on the Saturday. The two young men, considering the bride intently, as is the usage on such occasions, commended her for very fair and said that in effect she marvellously favoured Elena dead; wherefore they viewed her the more fixedly and it seemed they sought to devour her with their eyes. She, seeing and knowing them, could not forbear from laughing somewhat and after turned her face elsewhither; whereupon the two friends began to suspect that the bride was in very deed Elena herself. Accordingly, departing the church, they betook themselves to the Patriarchate and prevailed with the Patriarch to suffer them open the tomb wherein Elena had been buried. There finding neither bones nor flesh, the two young men raised a great outcry and returning to the place where the nuptials were toward, would have Elena at all hazards, one of them declaring that she had been promised him by her father; whereupon Gerardo and his rival, coming to high words, pledged each other their faith to meet at twenty o' the clock, with sword and target, in one of the squares of Venice; but, the thing coming to the cognizance of the Council of Ten, arms were prohibited and the matter

referred to the arbitrament of the law. Accordingly, the case being brought before the courts and the claimant being unable to allege otherwhat than her father's promise, whilst his rival proved by the nurse's witness and that of the young lady herself that he had espoused Elena and consummated the marriage, she was adjudged to be Gerardo's lawful wife. Messer Pietro, who was then absent from Venice, hearing the news and knowing Gerardo for a noble youth and a rich, accepted him, not only to son-in-law, but to son; so that he, from rich, became very rich and lived long in peace and allegresse with his Elena, oftentimes recalling the past tribulations with her and the dear nurse.¹

¹ Bandello adds here the incomprehensible words, "the which," *i.e.* the past tribulations? "were a very least part of all their losses" or troubles, "[they] going ever after from good to better" (*I quali minimissima parte furono di tutti lor danni, andando poi sempre di bene in meglio*).

Bandello

to the magnificent Captain Messer Giovanni
Battista Olivo.

This August last past my patroness, Madam Costanza Rangona¹ e Fregosa, departed the county of Agen, to avoid the parlous tumults foolishly and without any cause raised by the dregs of the populace of the city of Bordeaux,¹ whenas they murdered Monseigneur de Monin, lieutenant of the Most Christian King, the which cost them exceeding dear, for the severe and deserved chastisement which was given them. Her ladyship retired to Saint Nazaire, a castlewick of the Abbey of Fontfroid, some five or six Lombard miles distant from the ancient city of Narbonne, which gave its name to the province so called. There she established herself (for that the abbacy pertaineth unto one of the lords her sons and hath many castlewicks, with jurisdiction of bloodshedding,² and there be most goodly hunting-places, with great plenty of stags, wild goats, boars and other beasts of the chase, as well as of land and waterfowl, it being near the sea-shore) and was daily visited by the neighbouring gentlemen and barons. Now, it is a custom of the country that these said lords and

¹ In 1548. The revolt in question was caused by the oppressive incidence of the gabelle or salt tax.

² *i.e.* with right of justice high and low.

gentlemen go visiting one another in company with their wives and ladies and banishing melancholy and jealousy, lead a blithe and joyous life together, dancing and plying a thousand merry sports at all hours and seasons and kissing each other many a time in the course of every dance. It chanced one day that, it being discoursed of the cheats put upon Henry, Eighth of that name, King of England, by certain of his wives and of the vengeance wreaked by him on them, Signor Ramiro Torriglia, a Spaniard, who hath abidden long in Italy, related a story on the subject of the tricks that women play their husbands. His story pleased the listeners; wherefore I bethought me to write it down and remembering me that I had not yet dedicated to you one of my many novels, I accused myself of heedlessness and resolved that this should bear witness unto all of our mutual goodwill and of your most debonair courtesy. I will not for the nonce offer to tell of your lovingkindness, of the unfailing diligence which you show in the service of your friends and of your many other laudable parts, for that it were an overlong business and I took pen in hand to write to you with intent, not to recount your praises, but to give you this little story and certify you that, whereassoever I may be, I am and still shall be my generous Olivo's. Fare you well.

The Four-and-Thirtieth Story.

A CHEAT PUT BY THE QUEEN OF ARRAGON
UPON KING PEDRO HER HUSBAND, TO
HAVE CHILDREN BY HIM.

In the year of our salvation one thousand one hundred and ninety, a little more or a little less, Don Pedro of Arragon was Count of Barcelona and the seventh King of the Arragonese realm. He had to wife Donna Maria di Monte Pesulino, a niece of the Emperor of Constantinople. Donna Maria was very fair, but yet more lovesome and accomplished and was much beloved and revered of the people of Arragon for her goodly fashions and the gracious reception she gave unto all who had recourse to her, according to their degree and their worth, complensing them in every right and reasonable request. King Pedro, however, appeared to set very little store by her and leaving her well-nigh always alone abed, applied to diverting himself with other women; wherefore, albeit the queen might do many things in the kingdom and was much honoured of the barons, cavaliers and others and obeyed by all and the king never annulled aught that she did, nevertheless, she was nowise satisfied, but abode sore disconsolate, inasmuch as she had gladly contented herself with less authority in the manage of the realm, so but she might have had the due company and embracements of the king her husband aughts in bed. Of this her discontent she complained to no one; nay, if bytimes any bespoke her of the king's

amours and of the women with whom he commeced, she, like a discreet lady as she was, feigned to reck nothing thereof and answered only that she was excellent well entreated and cherished of the king, her husband and seignior, and that all he did was well done, inasmuch as he was lord and master of all. However, there were certain of the barons, to whom the king's manner of life was very ill-pleasing, for that, he having no legitimate son, them-seemed passing strange that he should not apply himself to beget a lawful heir and successor to his most illustrious crown ; nay, of this his heedlessness there was a great murmuring among the folk and every day there was some one complained thereof to the queen, who could say no otherwhat than that what the king willed, she also willed. Nevertheless, herseemed a grievous thing that he should reck so little of leaving an heir after his death. On the other hand, being e'en of flesh and blood, like other women, it irked her sore that he should entreat her so ill and should make more account of other women, who were not to be evened with her, either for beauty, for birth or for breeding ; and so, the poison of jealousy entering her breast, she fell to making sore complaint in herself of the life which the king led. Al gates, herseeming it were ill done to complain thereof unto others, she sundry whiles expostulated with himself as most temperately she might ; but she preached to deaf ears ; for the king, unheeding her sincere remonstrances, ensued his wonted way of life and gave himself a good time, now with this one and now with that of his favourites.

The queen, her eyes being opened by honourable jealousy, began to keep a more diligent watch upon his actions and amours and found that he had a trusty chamberlain, who was his confidant and was used, according to his wish,

to bring him now this woman and now that, conveying her privily into the palace and bestowing her in some chamber or other, against the king withdrew to sleep, when he brought her to bed to him and that mostwhiles without a light ; whereupon she bethought herself to bribe the chamberlain privily to put her to bed with her husband, in the stead of one of his paramours. Accordingly, she at divers times did and said to such purpose and promised the chamberlain so much that he consented to put this honourable cheat upon his master nor tarried overlong to carry the thing into effect, but, being presently commanded by his master to bring him that night one of his accustomed women, he advised the queen thereof, who made herself ready for the coming nuptials and abode expecting the hour. Now the king and queen lay in the same palace, but in separate chambers, no great distance apart, and accordingly, the appointed time come, the chamberlain carried the latter to the king's chamber and laid her beside her consort, who, thinking to have one of his wonted concubines, several times amorously disported himself with her ; then, the dawn drawing near, he gave her leave to depart and called the chamberlain to carry her away ; whereupon she, having thus accomplished her desire, bespoke her thus, saying, " My lord and husband, I am not she you deem me, for that you, thinking to lie with one of your paramours, have lain with me, who am your lawful wife. Methinketh, indeed, you should not take it ill if, unable by fair means to obtain that which is mine by right, I have gone about to compass it by means of an honourable deception, seeing that those who make use of their rights do no wrong unto any. You, as my king, my husband and my lord, may, an it please you, inflict every torment upon me and slay me ; but you cannot withal make that which is done undone. Wherefore,

if God so favour me that of the couplings which have this night been between us I become with child and in due time give birth to a son, to inherit this realm of Arragon, I pray you,—lest it be said that I have engendered him by adultery, it being notorious to all the folk that you lie not neither couple with me,—be pleased to give the chief barons of the kingdom who are at court to know that I have been with you this night and to let them see me here with you, so they may bear witness that the fruit of my womb is of your seed.”

The queen's innocent deception pleased the king and he would have all the barons and courtiers enter the chamber in the morning and see her abed with him, discovering unto all the shrewd device used by her. All with one accord commended their liege lady's wit, in that with such astuteness and foresight she had virtuously cozened her husband, and praised the latter for that he had taken that pleasant cheat in good part. Moreover, the king, thenceforward, altogether changed his manner of life and leaving his wonted paramours, began to love the queen amain and was so well satisfied with her embacements that from that time forth he lay with no other woman. Meanwhile, our Lord God so favoured the good queen that she conceived with child of a son and in due season gave birth to him on the first day of February, 1196, whereat all the Arragonese were inexpressibly rejoiced, seeing the succession assured to a legitimate heir of their native king. The child was [incontinent] carried to the church, according to the custom of those parts, and it chanced that, as those entered in that bore him, the priests of the place, who knew nothing of the fact, struck up with that most goodly canticle, *Te Deum Laudamus*, which those two holy doctors of the Catholic Church, Saint

Ambrose and Saint Augustine, composed aforetime by turns, upon the baptism of the latter, Ambrose beginning and Augustine responding. Moreover, the child being after carried from that church to another, the priests of the latter, at his entering in, intoned the canticle of Zachariah the prophet, father of the Precursor of the Redeemer of the human race, saying, *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*; the which was a most evident sign that the newborn child should be a king of great goodliness and justice. Then, the boy coming to be baptized and the king and queen knowing not what name to give him, they, at the last, after much debate, agreed upon this device; to wit, they let take twelve candles of an equal size and weight and kindle them all at once in honour of the twelve Apostles, there being written on each candle the name of an Apostle, to the intent that his name whose candle was first spent should be given to the babe; wherefore, that dedicated to Saint James burning out before the others, the boy was accordingly called Jayme. He grew up and proved a man of exceeding excellence and good governance both in war and in peace. He made very stern and fierce war upon the Moors, expelling them by main force from the Balearic Islands, to wit, Majorca and Minorca; moreover, he reconquered the kingdom of Valencia and passing the straits of Gibraltar, did exceeding great hurt to the infidels, exalting the Christian faith as most he might.

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